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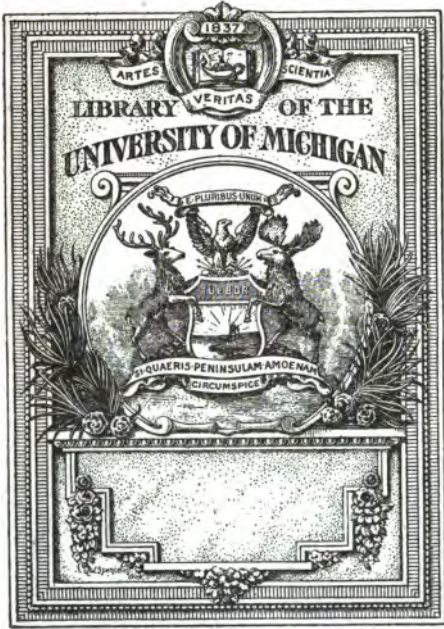
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AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN.

VOL. I.



AN  
AMERICAN POLITICIAN

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J. Nobel

BY  
F. MARION CRAWFORD

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"TO LEEWARD," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES  
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TO

MY DEAR FRIEND

Elizabeth Christophers Hobson

IN GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION

I DEDICATE THIS STORY.

*Constantinople,  
August 16th, 1884.*



# AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN.

## CHAPTER I.

MRS. SAM WYNDHAM was generally at home after five o'clock. The established custom whereby the ladies who live in Beacon Street all receive their friends on Monday afternoon, did not seem to her satisfactory. She was willing to conform to the practice, but she reserved the right of seeing people on other days as well.

Mrs. Sam Wyndham was never very popular. That is to say, she was not one of those women who are seemingly never spoken ill of, and are invited as a matter of course, or rather as an element of success, to every dinner, musical party, and dance in the season. Women did not all regard her with envy, all young men

did not think she was capital fun, nor did all old men come and confide to her the weaknesses of their approaching second childhood. She was not invariably quoted as the standard authority on dress, classical music, and Boston literature, and it was not an unpardonable heresy to say that some other women might be, had been, or could be, more amusing in ordinary conversation. Nevertheless, Mrs. Sam Wyndham held a position in Boston which Boston acknowledged, and which Boston insisted that foreigners such as New Yorkers, Philadelphians and the like, should acknowledge also in that spirit of reverence which is justly due to a descent on both sides from several signers of the Declaration of Independence, and to the wife of one of the ruling financial spirits of the aristocratic part of Boston business.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Wyndham was about forty years of age, as all her friends of course knew; for it is as easy for a Bostonian to conceal a question of age as for a crowned head. In a place where one half of society calls the other half cousin, and went to school with it, every one knows and accurately remembers just

how old everybody else is. But Mrs. Wyndham might have passed for younger than she was among the world at large, for she was fresh to look at, and of good figure and complexion. Her black hair showed no signs of turning grey, and her dark eyes were bright and penetrating still. There were lines in her face, those microscopic lines that come so abundantly to American women in middle age, speaking of a certain restless nervousness that belongs to them especially; but on the whole Mrs. Sam Wyndham was fair to see, having a dignity of carriage and a grace of ease about her that at once gave the impression of a woman thoroughly equal to the part she had to play in the world, and not by any means incapable of enjoying it.

For the rest Mrs. Sam led a life very much like the lives of many rich Americans. She went abroad frequently, wandered about the continent with her husband, went to Egypt and Algiers, stayed in England, where she had a good many friends, avoided her countrymen and countrywomen when away from home, and did her duty in the social state to which she

was called in Boston. She read the books of the period and generally pronounced them ridiculous; she believed in her husband's politics, and aristocratically approved the way in which he abstained from putting theory into practice, from voting, and in a general way from dirtying his fingers with anything so corrupt as government, or so despicable as elections; she understood Boston business to some extent, and called it finance, but she despised the New York Stock Market and denounced its doings as gambling. She made fine distinctions, but she was a woman of sense, and was generally more likely to be right than wrong when she had a definite opinion, or expressed a definite dislike. Her religious views were simple and unobtrusive, and never changed.

Her custom of being at home after five o'clock was, perhaps the only deviation she allowed herself from the established manners of her native city, and since two or three other ladies had followed her example, it had come to be regarded as a perfectly harmless idiosyncrasy for which she could not properly be blamed. The people who came to see her were

chiefly men. Present, of course, on the inevitable Monday.

A day or two before Christmas, then, Mrs. Sam Wyndham was at home in the afternoon. The snow lay thick and hard outside, and the sleigh bells tinkled unceasingly as the sleighs slipped by the window, gleaming and glittering in the deep red glow of the sunset. The track was well beaten for miles away, down Beacon Street and across the Mill-dam to the country, and the pavements were strewn with ashes to give a foothold for pedestrians. For the frost was sharp and lasting. But within, Mrs. Wyndham sat by the fire with a small table before her, and one companion by her side, for whom she was pouring tea.

"Tell me all about your summer, Mr. Vancouver," said she, teasing the flame of the spirit-lamp into better shape with a small silver instrument.

Mr. Pocock Vancouver leaned back in his corner of the sofa and looked at the fire, then at the window, and finally at his hostess, before he answered. He was a pale man and slight of figure, with dark eyes, and his carefully

brushed hair, turning grey at the temples and over his forehead, threw his delicate intelligent face into relief.

"I have not done much," he answered, rather absently, as though trying to find something interesting in his reminiscences; and he watched Mrs. Wyndham as she filled a cup. He was not the least anxious to talk, it seemed, and he had an air of being thoroughly at home.

"You were in England most of the time, were you not?"

"Yes—I believe I was. Oh, by the bye, I met Harrington in Paris; I thought he meant to stay at home."

"He often goes abroad," said Mrs. Wyndham indifferently. "One lump of sugar?"

"Two, if you please—no cream—thanks. Does he go to Paris to convert the French, or to glean materials for converting other people?" inquired Mr. Vancouver languidly.

"I am sure I cannot tell you," answered the lady, still indifferently. "What do you go to Paris for?"

"Principally to renew my acquaintance with



civilized institutions and humanising influences.)  
What does anybody go abroad for?"

"You always talk like that when you come home, Mr. Vancouver," said Mrs. Wyndham. "But nevertheless you come back and seem to find Boston bearable. It is not such a bad place after all, is it?"

"If it were not for half-a-dozen people here, I would never come back at all," said Mr. Vancouver. "But then, I am not originally one of you, and I suppose that makes a difference."

"And pray, who are the half-dozen people who procure us the honour of your presence?"

"You are one of them, Mrs. Wyndham," he answered, looking at her.

"I am much obliged," she replied, demurely. "Any one else?"

"Oh—John Harrington," said Vancouver with a little laugh.

"Really?" said Mrs. Wyndham, innocently; "I did not know you were such good friends."

Mr. Vancouver sipped his tea in silence for a moment and stared at the fire.

"I have a great respect for Harrington," he said at last. "He interests me very much, and I like to meet him." He spoke seriously, as though thoroughly in earnest. The faintest look of amusement came into Mrs. Wyndham's face for a moment.

"I am glad of that," she said; "Mr. Harrington is a very good friend of mine. Do you mind lighting those candles? The days are dreadfully short."

Pocock Vancouver rose with alacrity and performed the service required.

"By the way," said Mrs. Wyndham, watching him, "I have a surprise for you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, an immense surprise. Do you remember Sybil Brandon?"

"Charlie Brandon's daughter? Very well—saw her at Newport some time ago. Lily-white style—all eyes and hair."

"You ought to remember her. You used to rave about her, and you nearly ruined yourself in roses. You will have another chance; she is going to spend the winter with me."

"Not really?" ejaculated Mr. Vancouver, in some surprise, as he again sat down on the sofa.

"Yes; you know she is all alone in the world now."

"What? Is her mother dead too?"

"She died last spring, in Paris. I thought you knew."

"No," said Vancouver, thoughtfully. "How awfully sad!"

"Poor girl," said Mrs. Wyndham; "I thought it would do her good to be among live people, even if she does not go out."

"When is she coming?" There was a show of interest about the question.

"She is here now," answered Mrs. Sam.

"Dear me!" said Vancouver. "May I have another cup?" His hostess began the usual series of operations necessary to produce a second cup of tea.

"Mrs. Wyndham," began Vancouver again after a pause, "I have an idea—do not laugh, it is a very good one, I am sure."

"I am not laughing."

"Why not marry Sybil Brandon to John Harrington?"

Mrs. Wyndham stared for a moment.

"How perfectly ridiculous!" she cried at last.

"Why?"

"They would starve, to begin with."

"I doubt it," said Vancouver.

"Why, I am sure Mr. Harrington never had more than five thousand a-year in his life. You could not marry on that, you know—possibly."

"No; but Miss Brandon is very well off—rich, in fact."

"I thought she had nothing."

"She must have thirty or forty thousand a year from her mother, at the least. You know Charlie never did anything in his life; he lived on his wife's money, and Miss Brandon must have it all."

Mrs. Wyndham did not appear surprised at the information—she hardly seemed to think it of any importance.

"I knew she had something," she repeated; "but I am glad if you are right. But that does not make it any more feasible to marry her to Mr. Harrington."

"I thought that starvation was your objection," said Vancouver.

"Oh, no; not that only. Besides, he would not marry her."

"He would be very foolish not to, if he had the chance," remarked Vancouver.

"Perhaps he might not even have the chance—perhaps she would not marry him," said Mrs. Wyndham, thoughtfully. "Besides, I do not think John Harrington ought to marry yet; he has other things to do."

Mr. Vancouver seemed about to say something in answer, but he checked himself; possibly he did not speak because he saw some one enter the room at that moment, and was willing to leave the discussion of John Harrington to a future time. In fact, the person who entered the room should have been the very last to hear the conversation that was taking place, for it was Miss Brandon herself, though Mr. Vancouver had not recognized her at once.

There were greetings and hand-shakings, and then Miss Brandon sat down by the fire and spread out her hands as though to warm them. She looked white and cold.

There are women in the world, both young and old, who seem to move among us like visions from another world, a world that is purer and fairer and more heavenly than this one in which the rest of us move. It is hard to say what such women have that marks them so distinctly; sometimes it is beauty, sometimes only a manner, often it is both. It is very certain that we know and feel their influence, and that many men fear it as something strange and contrary to the common order of things, a living reproach and protest against all that is base and earthly, and badly human.

Most people would have said first of Sybil Brandon that she was cold, and many would have added that she was beautiful. Ill-natured people sometimes said she was deathly. No one ever said she was pretty. Vancouver's description—lily-white, all eyes and hair—certainly struck the principal facts of her appearance, for her skin was whiter than is commonly natural, her eyes were very deep and large and blue, and her soft brown hair seemed to be almost a burden to her from its great quantity.

She was dressed entirely in black, and being rather tall and very slight of figure, the dress somewhat exaggerated the ethereal look that was natural to her. She seemed cold, and spread out her delicate hands to the bright flame of the blazing wood fire. Mrs. Wyndham and Pocock Vancouver looked at her in silence for a moment. Then Mrs. Wyndham rose with a cup of tea in her hand, and crossed to the other side of the fireplace where Sybil was sitting and offered it to her.

"Poor Sybil, you are so cold. Drink some tea." The elder woman sat down by the young girl, and lightly kissed her cheek. "You must not be sad, darling," she whispered sympathetically.

"I am not sad at all, really," answered Miss Brandon aloud, quite naturally, but pressing Mrs. Wyndham's hand a little, as though in acknowledgment of her sympathy.

"No one can be sad in Boston," said Vancouver, putting in a word. "Our city is altogether too wildly gay." He laughed a little.

"You must not make fun of us to visitors,

Mr. Vancouver," answered Mrs. Wyndham, still holding Sybil's hand.

"It is Mr. Vancouver's ruling passion, though he never acknowledges it," said Miss Brandon, calmly. "I remember it of old."

"I am flattered at being remembered," said Mr. Vancouver, whose delicate features betrayed neither pleasure nor interest, however. "But," he continued, "I am not particularly flattered at being called a scoffer at my own people—"

"I did not say that," interrupted Miss Brandon.

"Well, you said my ruling passion was making fun of Boston to visitors; at least, you and Mrs. Wyndham said it between you. I really never do that, unless I give the other side of the question as well."

"What other side?" asked Mrs. Sam, who wanted to make conversation.

"Boston," said Vancouver with some solemnity, "is not more often ridiculous than other great institutions."

"You simply take one's breath away, Mr. Vancouver," said Mrs. Wyndham, with a good



deal of emphasis. "The idea of calling Boston 'an institution'!"

"Why, certainly. The United States are only an institution after all. You could not soberly call us a nation. Even you could not reasonably be moved to fine patriotic phrases about your native country, if your ancestors had signed twenty Declarations of Independence. We live in a great institution, and we have every right to flatter ourselves on the success of its management; but in the long run this thing will not do for a nation."

Miss Brandon looked at Vancouver with a sort of calm incredulity. Mrs. Wyndham always quarrelled with him on points like the one now raised, and accordingly took up the cudgels.

"I do not see how you can congratulate yourself on the management of your institution, as you call it, when you know very well you would rather die than have anything to do with it."

"Very true. But then, you always say that gentlemen should not touch anything so dirty as politics, Mrs. Wyndham," retorted Vancouver.

"Well, that just shows that it is not an institution at all, and that you are quite wrong, and that we are a great nation supported and carried on by real patriotism."

"And the Irish and German votes," added Vancouver, with that scorn which only the true son of freedom can exhibit in speaking of his fellow-citizens.

"Oh, the Irish vote! That is always the last word in the argument," answered Mrs. Sam.

"I do not see exactly what the Irish have to do with it," remarked Miss Brandon, innocently. She did not understand politics.

Vancouver glanced at the clock and took his hat.

"It is very simple," he said, rising to go. "It is the bull in the china shop—the Irish bull amongst the American china—dangerous, you know. Good evening, Mrs. Wyndham; good evening, Miss Brandon." And he took his leave. Miss Brandon watched his slim figure disappear through the heavy curtains of the door.

"He has not changed much since I knew

him," she said, turning again to the fire. "I used to think he was clever."

"And have you changed your mind?" asked Mrs. Wyndham, laughing.

"Not quite, but I begin to doubt. He has very good manners, and looks altogether like a gentleman."

"Of course," said Mrs. Wyndham; "his mother was a Shaw, although his father came from South Carolina. But he is really very bright; Sam always says he is one of the ablest men in Boston."

"In what way?" inquired Sybil.

"Oh, he is a lawyer, don't you know?—great railroad man."

"Oh," ejaculated Miss Brandon, and relapsed into silence.

Mrs. Wyndham rose and stood before the fire, and pushed a log back with her small foot. Miss Brandon watched her, half wondering whether the flame would not catch her dress.

"I have been to see that Miss Thorn," said Sybil presently.

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Sam, with sudden interest, "tell me all about her this minute,

dear. Is not she the most extraordinary creature?"

"I rather like her," answered Miss Brandon. "She is very pretty."

"What style? Dark?"

"No; not exactly. Brown hair, and lots of eyebrows. She is a little thing, but very much alive, you know."

"Awfully English, of course," suggested Mrs. Sam.

"Well—yes, I suppose so. She is wild about horses, and says she shoots. But I like her—I am sure I shall like her very much. She does not seem very pleased with her aunt."

"I do not wonder," said Mrs. Sam. "Poor little thing—she has nobody else belonging to her, has she?"

"Oh, yes," answered Sybil, with a little tremor in her voice; "she has a mother in England."

"I want to see her ever so much," said Mrs. Sam. "Bring her to luncheon."

"You will see her to-night, I think; she said she was going to that party."

"I hate to leave you alone," said Mrs.

Wyndham. "I really think I had better not go."

"Dear Mrs. Wyndham," said Sybil, rising, and laying her hands on her hostess's shoulders, half affectionately, half in protest, "this idea must be stopped from the first, and I mean to stop it. You are not to give up any party, or any society, or anything at all for me. If you do I will go away again. Promise me, will you not?"

"Very well, dear. But you know you are the dearest girl in the world." And so they kissed, and agreed that Mrs. Wyndham should go out, and that Sybil should stay at home.

Mrs. Wyndham was really a very kind-hearted woman and a loving friend. That might be the reason why she was never popular. Popularity is a curious combination of friendliness and indifference, but very popular people rarely have devoted friends, and still more rarely suffer great passions. Everybody's friend is far too apt to be nobody's, for it is impossible to rely on the support of a person whose devotion is liable to be called upon a hundred times a day, from a hundred different quarters. The

friendships that mean anything mean sacrifice for friendship's sake; and a man or a woman really ready to make sacrifices for a considerable number of people is likely to be asked to do it very often, and to be soon spent in the effort to be true to every one.

But popularity makes no great demands. The popular man is known to be so busy in being popular that his offences of omission are readily pardoned. His engagements are legion, his obligations are innumerable, and far more than he can fulfil. But, meet him when you will, his smile is as bright, his greeting as cordial, and his sayings as universally good-natured and satisfactory as ever. He has acquired the habit of pleasing, and it is almost impossible for him to displease. He enjoys it all, is agreeable to every one, and is never expected to catch cold in attending a friend's funeral, or otherwise to sacrifice his comfort, because he is quite certain to have important engagements elsewhere, in which the world always believes. There is probably no individual more absolutely free and untrammelled than the thoroughly popular man.

## CHAPTER II.

FATE, the artist, mixes her own colours. She grinds them with a pestle in the fashion of the old masters, and out of the most strange pigments she produces often only soft neutral tints for back-ground and shadow, kneading a vast deal of bright colours away among the greys and browns; but now and then she takes a pallet loaded with strong paint, and a great brush, and splashes a startling full-length portrait upon the canvas, without much regard for drawing or general composition, but with very startling effect. To paint well needs life-long study; to paint so as merely to attract attention needs courage and a heart hardened against artistic sensitiveness.

John Harrington was a high light against the mezzotint of his surroundings. He was a constant source of interest, and not in-

frequently of terror, to the good town of Boston. True, he was a Bostonian himself, a chip of the old block, whose progenitors had lived in Salem, and whose very name breathed Pilgrim memories. He even had a teapot that had come over in the *Mayflower*. This was greatly venerated, and whenever John Harrington said anything more than usually modern, his friends brandished the teapot, morally speaking, in his defence, and put it in the clouds as a kind of rainbow—a promise that Puritan blood could not go wrong. Nevertheless, John Harrington continued to startle his fellow-townsmen by his writings and sayings, so that many of the grave sort shook their heads and swore that he sympathised with the Irish and believed in Chinese labour.

As a matter-of-fact, he did not mince matters. Endowed with unbounded courage and an extraordinary command of language, when he got upon his feet he spoke his mind in a way that was good to hear. Moreover, he had the strong oratorical temperament that forces attention and commands men in a body. He said that things were wrong and should be put



right; and when he had said so for half-an-hour to a couple of thousand people most of them were ready to follow him out of the hall and go and put things right on the spot, with their own hands. As yet the opportunity had not offered for proceeding in so simple a manner, but the aforesaid Bostonians of the graver sort said that John Harrington would some day be seen heading a desperate mob of socialists in an assault upon the State House. What he had to do with socialism, or to what end he should thus fiercely invade the headquarters of all earthly respectability, was not exactly apparent, but the picture thus evoked in the minds of the solemn burghers satisfactorily defined for them the personality of the man, and they said it and said it again.

It was somewhat remarkable that he had never been called clever. At first he was regarded as a fool by most of his own class, though he always had friends who believed in him. By-and-by, as it came to be seen that he had a purpose and would be listened to while he stated it, Boston said there was something in him; but he was never said to be clever or

'bright' — he was John Harrington, neither more nor less. He was never even called 'Jack.'

He was a friend of Mrs. Wyndham's; her keen instincts had long ago recognised the true metal in the man, and of all who came and went in her house there was none more welcome than he. Sam Wyndham utterly disagreed with him in politics, but always defended him in private, saying that he would 'calm down a lot when he got older,' and that meanwhile he was 'a very good fellow if you did not stir him up.'

He was therefore very intimate at the Sam Wyndham establishment; in fact, at the very hour when Pocock Vancouver was drinking Mrs. Sam's tea, John had intended to be enjoying the same privilege. Unfortunately for his intention he was caught elsewhere and could not get away. He was drinking tea, it is true, but the position in which he found himself was not entirely to his taste.

Old Miss Schenectady, whose niece, Miss Josephine Thorn, had lately come over from England to pass the winter, had asked John

Harrington to call that afternoon. The old lady believed in John on account of the *Mayflower* teapot, and consequently thought him a desirable acquaintance for her niece. Accordingly, John went to the house, and met Miss Sybil Brandon just as she was leaving it; which he regretted, suspecting that her society would have been more interesting than that of Miss Thorn. As it turned out, he was right, for his first impression of the young English girl was not altogether agreeable; and he found himself obliged to stay and talk to her until an ancient lady, who had come to gossip with Miss Schenectady, and was fully carrying out her intentions, should go away and make it possible for him to take his leave without absolutely abandoning Miss Thorn in the corner of the room she had selected for the *tête-à-tête*.

"All that, of course, you know," said Miss Thorn, in answer to some remark of John's, "but what sort of things do you really care for?"

"People," answered John, without hesitation.

"Of course," returned his companion, "everybody likes people. It is not very original.

One could not live without lots of society, could one?"

"That depends on the meaning of society."

"Oh, I am not in the least learned about meanings," answered Miss Thorn. "I mean what one means by society, you know. Heaps of men and women, and tea-parties, and staying in the country, and that."

"That is a sketch indeed," said John, laughing. "But then it is rather different here. We do not relapse into the country as you do in England, and then come back to town like lions refreshed with sleep."

"Why not?"

"Because once in society here one is always in it. At least, most people are. As soon as heat begins Boston goes to New York; and by-and-by New York goes to Saratoga, and takes Boston with it; and then all three go to Newport, and the thing begins again, until there is a general rush to Lennox, to see the glories of the autumn; and by the time the glories are getting a little thin it is time to be in Beacon Street again."

"But when do people shoot and ride?—do

they ever hunt?" asked Miss Thorn, opening her wide brown eyes in some astonishment at John Harrington's description of society life in America.

"Oh yes, they hunt at Newport with a drag and a bagged fox. They do it in July and August, when it is as hot as it can be, and the farmers turn out with pitchforks and stones to warn them off the growing crops."

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Miss Josephine.

"It is absurd, of course," said Harrington, "and cruel. But I must say they ride as though there were no hereafter, and it is a stiff country."

"They must, I should think; no one who believed in a hereafter would hunt in summer."

"I will wager that if you go to Newport this summer you will hunt, just like everybody else," said John boldly.

Josephine Thorn knew in her heart that it was true, but she did not like the tone in which John said it. There was an air of certainty about his way of talking that roused her opposition.

"I would do nothing so foolish," said she.

You do not know me. And do you mean to tell me that you like these people who rush madly about the country and hunt in summer, and those sort of things ? ”

“ No,” said John, “ not always.”

“ But you said you liked people. How awfully inconsistent you are ! ”

“ Excuse me, I think not. I meant that I liked people and having to do with them—with men and women—better than I like things.”

“ What are ‘ things ’ ? ” inquired Josephine, sarcastically. “ You are not very clear in your way of expressing yourself.”

“ I will be as clear as you please,” answered John, looking across the room at Miss Schenectady and her ancient friend, and devoutly wishing he could get away. “ I mean by ‘ things ’ the study of the inanimate part of creation, of such sciences as are not directly connected with man’s thoughts and actions, and such pursuits as hunting, shooting, and sporting of all kinds, which lead only to the amusement of the individual. I mean also the production of literature for literature’s sake,

and of works of art for the mere sake of themselves. When I say I like 'people,' I mean men and women, their opinions and their relations to each other."

"I should think you would get very tired of them," said Miss Thorn scornfully. "They are all dreadfully alike."

She never forgot the look Harrington turned upon her as he answered. His calm, deep-set grey eyes gazed steadily at her, and his square features assumed an air of gravity that almost startled her.

"I am never tired of men and women," he said. "Has it ever struck you, Miss Thorn, that the study of men and women means the study of government, and that a knowledge of men and women may give the power to influence the destiny of mankind?"

"I never thought of it like that," said Josephine, very quietly. She was surprised at his manner, and she suddenly felt that he was no ordinary man.

To tell the truth, her aunt had informed her that John Harrington was coming that afternoon, and had told her he was an exceedingly

able man, a statement which at once roused Josephine's opposition to its fiercest pitch. She thoroughly hated to be warned about people, to be primed as it were with a dose of their superiority beforehand. It always prepared her to dislike the admirable individual when he appeared. It seemed as though it were taken for granted that she herself had not enough intelligence to discover wit in others, and needed to be told of it with great circumstance in order to be upon her good behaviour. Consequently Josephine began by disliking John. She thought he was a Philistine; his hair was too straight, and besides, it was red; he shaved all his face, whereas the men she liked always had beards; she liked men with black eyes, or blue—John's were grey and hard; he spoke quietly, without expression, and she liked men who were enthusiastic. After all, too, the things he said were not very clever; anybody could have said them.

She meant to show her Boston aunt that she had no intention of accepting Boston genius on faith. It was not her way; she



liked to find out for herself whether people were able or not, without being told, and if she ascertained that John Harrington enjoyed a fictitious reputation for genius it would amuse her to destroy it—or at all events to write a long letter home to a friend, expressing her supreme opinion on that and other matters.

John, on his part, did not very much care what impression he produced. He never did on such occasions, and just now he was rendered doubly indifferent by the fact that he was wishing himself somewhere else. True, there was a certain novelty in being asked point-blank questions about his tastes. Boston people knew what he liked, and generally only asked him about what he did. Perhaps, if he had met Josephine by daylight, instead of in the dim shadows of Miss Schenectady's front drawing-room, he might have been struck by her appearance and interested by her manner. As it was, he was merely endeavouring to get through his visit with a proper amount of civility, in the hope that he might get away in time to see Mrs. Sam Wyndham before dinner.

Josephine thought John dull, probably well informed, and utterly without interest in anything. She felt inclined to do something desperate—to throw the cushions at him, to do anything, in short, to rouse him from his calmness. Then he made that remark about government, and his voice deepened, and his grey eyes shone, and she was aware that he had a great and absorbing interest in life, and that he could be roused in one direction at least. To do her justice, she had quick perceptions, and the impression on her mind was instantaneous.

“I never thought of it like that,” she said. “Do you know?” she added in a moment, “I should not have thought you took much interest in anything at all.”

John laughed. He was amused at the idea that he, who knew himself to be one of the most enthusiastic of mortals, should be thought indifferent; and he was amused at the outspoken frankness of the girl's remark.

“You know that is just like me,” continued Miss Thorn quickly. “I always say what I think, you know. I cannot help it a bit.”

“What a pity all the world is not like you!”

said John. "It would save a great deal of trouble, I am sure."

"The frump is going at last," said Josephine, in an undertone, as the ancient friend rose and showed signs of taking leave of Miss Schenectady.

"There is certainly no mistake about the frankness of that speech," said John, rising to his feet and laughing again.

"There is no mistaking its truth," answered Josephine. "She is the real thing—the real old-fashioned frump—we have lots of them at home."

"You remind me of Boileau," said John. "He said he called a cat a cat, and Rollin a scamp."

Miss Thorn laughed.

"Exactly," she answered, "that is the knowledge of men which you say leads to power." She rose also, and there was a little stir as the old lady departed. Josephine watched John as he bowed and opened the door of the room to let the visitor out. She wondered vaguely whether she would like him, whether he might not really be a remarkable man—a fact she

doubted in proportion as her aunt assured her of its truth; she liked his looks and tried to determine whether he was handsome or not, and she watched closely for any awkwardness or shyness of manner; that being the fault in a man which she never pardoned.

He was very different from the men she had generally known, and most completely different from those she had known as her admirers. In fact she had never admired her admirers at all—except dear Ronald, of course. They competed with her on her own ground, and she knew well enough she was more than a match for any of them. Ronald was different; she had known him all her life. But all those other men! They could ride—but she rode as well, or better. They could shoot, but so could she, and allowing for the disadvantages of a woman in field sports, she was as good a shot as they. She knew she could do anything they could do, and understood most things they understood. All in all, she did not care for the average young Englishman. He was great fun in his own way, but there were probably more interesting things in the world than pheasants

and fences. Politics would be interesting, she thought; she had known three or four men who were young and already prominent in parliament, and they were undeniably interesting; but they were generally either ugly, or clumsy — the unpardonable sin — or perhaps they were vain. Josephine could not bear vain men. John Harrington probably had some one or more of these defects. He was certainly no "beauty man," to begin with, nevertheless, she wondered whether he might not be called handsome by stretching a point. She rather hoped, inwardly and unconsciously, that her ultimate judgment would decide in favour of his good looks. She always judged; it was the first thing she did, and she was surprised, on the present occasion, to find her judgment so slow.

People who pride themselves on being critical are often annoyed when they find themselves uncertain of their own opinion. As for his accomplishments, they were doubtful, to say the least. Miss Thorn was not used to considering American men as manly. She had read a great many books which made game of them, and showed how unused they were to

all those good things which make up the life of an English country gentleman; she had met one or two Americans who turned up their noses in impotent scorn of all field sports except horse-racing, which they regarded from a financial point of view. Probably John Harrington had never killed a pheasant in his life. Lastly, he might be vain. A man with such a reputation for ability would most likely be conceited.

And yet, despite probability, she could not help thinking John interesting. That one speech of his about government had meant something. He was a man with a strong personality, with a great interest in the world led by a dominant aspiration of some sort; and Josephine, in her heart, loved power and admired those who possessed it. Political power especially had that charm for her which it has for most English people of the upper class. There is some quality in the English race which breeds an inordinate admiration for all kinds of superiority; it is certain that if one class of English society can be justly accused of an over-great veneration for rank, the class

which is rank itself is not behindhand in doing homage to the political stars of the day. In favour of this peculiarity of English people, it may fairly be said that they love to associate with persons of rank and power from a disinterested love of those things themselves, whereas in most other countries the society of noble and influential persons is chiefly sought from the most cynical motives of personal advantage.

Politics—that is, the outward and appreciable manifestations of political life—must always furnish abundant food for the curiosity of the many and the intelligent criticism of the few. There is no exception to that rule, be the state great or small. But politics in England and politics in America, so far as the main points are concerned, are as different as it is possible for any two social functions to be. Roughly, Government and the doings of Government are centripetal in England, and centrifugal in America. In England the will of the people assists the workings of Providence, whereas in America devout persons pray that Providence may on occasion modify the will of the people.

In England men believe in the Queen, the Royal Family, the Established Church, and Belgravia first, and in themselves afterwards; Americans believe in themselves devoutly, and a man who could "establish" upon them a church, a royalty, or a peerage, would be a very clever fellow.

Josephine Thorn and John Harrington were fair examples of their nationalities. Josephine believed in England and the English; John Harrington believed in America and the Americans. How far England and America are ever likely to believe in each other, however, is a question of future history and not of past experience, and any reasonable amount of doubt may be cast upon the possibility of such mutual confidence.

But as Josephine stood watching John Harrington while he opened the drawing-room door for the visitor to go out, she thought of none of these things. She certainly did not consider herself a type of her nation—a distinction to which few English people aspire—and she as certainly would have denied that the man before her was a type of the modern American.



John remained standing when the lady was gone.

“Do sit down,” said Miss Schenectady, settling herself once more in her corner.

“Thank you, I think I must be going now,” answered John. “It is late.” As he spoke he turned toward Miss Thorn, and for the first time saw her under the bright light of the old-fashioned gas chandelier.

The young girl was perhaps not what is called a great beauty, but she was undeniably handsome, and she possessed that quality which often goes with quick perceptions and great activity, and which is commonly defined by the expression “striking.” Short, rather than tall, she was yet so proportioned between strength and fineness as to be very graceful, and her head sat proudly on her shoulders—too proudly sometimes, for she could command and she could be angry. Her wide brown eyes were bright and fearless and honest. The faint colour came and went under the clear skin as freely as the heart could send it, and though her hair was brown and soft there were ruddy tints among the coils that flashed out

unexpectedly here and there like threads of red gold twined in a mass of fine silk.

John looked at her in some astonishment, for in his anxiety to be gone and in the dimness of the corner where they had sat, he had not realized that Josephine was any more remarkable in her appearance than most of the extremely young women who annually make their entrance into society, with the average stock of pink and white prettiness. They call them "buds" in Boston—an abbreviation for rosebuds.

Fresh young roses of each opening year, fresh with the dew of heaven and the blush of innocence, coming up in this wild garden of a world, what would the gardener do without you? Where would all beauty and sweetness be found among the thorny bushes and the withering old shrubs and the rotting weeds, were it not for you? Maidens with clean hands and pure hearts, in whose touch there is something that heals the ills and soothes the pains of mortality, roses whose petals are yet unspotted by dust and rain, and whose divine perfume the hot south wind

has not scorched, nor the east wind nipped and frozen—you are the protest, set every year among us, against the rottenness of the world's doings, the protest of the angelic life against the earthly, of the eternal good against the eternal bad.

John Harrington looked at Miss Thorn, and looked at her with pleasure, for he saw that she was fair—but in spite of her newly discovered beauty, he resisted Miss Schenectady's invitation to sit down again, and departed. Any other man would have stayed, under the circumstances.

"Well, Josephine," said Miss Schenectady, when he was gone, "now you have seen John Harrington."

Josephine looked at her aunt and laughed a little; it seemed to her a very self-evident fact, since John had just gone.

"Exactly," said she. "Won't you call me Joe, Aunt Zoruiah? They all do at home—even Ronald."

"Joe? Boy's name. Well, if you insist upon it. As I was saying, you have seen John Harrington, now."

"Exactly," repeated Joe.

"But I mean, how does he strike you?"

"Clever I should think," answered the young lady. "Clever, you know—that sort of thing. Not bad-looking either."

"I told you so," said Miss Schenectady.

"Yes—but I expected ever so much more from what you said," returned Joe, kneeling on the rug before the fire and poking the coals with the tongs. Miss Schenectady looked somewhat offended at the slight cast upon her late guest.

"You are very *difficile*, Josephi— I mean Joe, I forgot."

"Ye—es, very diffyseal—that sort of thing," repeated Josephine, mimicking her aunt's pronunciation of the foreign word, "I know I am, I can't possibly help it, you know." A dashing thrust with the tongs finally destroyed the equilibrium of the fire, and the coals came tumbling down upon the hearth.

"Goodness gracious me!" exclaimed the old lady in great anxiety, "you will have the house on fire in no time! Give me the tongs right away, my dear. You do not understand American fires!"

## CHAPTER III.

“DEAR RONALD,—You can’t imagine what a funny place Boston is. I wish you were here, it would be so nice to talk about them together—I mean the people, of course, for they are much funnier than the place they live in. But I think they are very nice, too, particularly some of the men. I don’t understand the women in the least—they go in awfully for sets, if you understand that kind of thing—and art, too, and literature. The other day at a lunch party—that is what they call it here—they sat and talked about pictures for ever so long. I wonder what you would have said if you had been there! but then there were no men, and so you couldn’t have been, could you? And the sets, too. The girls, who come out together, all in a batch, like a hive of bees swarming, spend the rest of their lives together; and they have what they call sewing circles, that go on all their lives. There are sewing circles of old frumps sixty years old, who have never been

parted since they all went to their first ball together. They sew for the poor; they don't sew so very much, you know; but then they have a tremendous lunch afterwards. I sewed for the poor the other day, because one of the sewing circles asked me to their meeting. I sewed two buttons on to the end of something, and then I ate six kinds of salad, and went to drive with Mr. Vancouver. I dare say it does a lot of good in its way, but I think the poor must be awfully good-natured.

"It is quite too funny about driving, too. You may go out with a man in a sleigh, but you couldn't possibly go with him on wheels—on the same road, at the same hour, same man, same everything, except the wheels. You agree to go out next week in a sleigh with Mr. Vancouver; but when the day comes, if it has happened to thaw and there is no snow, and he comes in a buggy, you couldn't possibly go with him, because it would be quite too improper. But I mean to some day, just to see what they will say. I wish you would come! We would do a lot of driving together, and, by-and-by, in the spring, they say one can ride here, but only along the roads, for everything else is so thick with steam engines and Irishmen that one could not possibly go across country.

"But although they are so funny, they are

really very nice, and awfully clever. I don't think there are nearly so many clever men anywhere else in society, when once you have got over their Americanisms. Most of them would be in Parliament at home; but nobody goes into Parliament here, except Mr. Harrington—that is, into Congress, which is the same thing, you know. They say politics in America are not at all fit for gentlemen, and they spend an hour or two every day in abusing all the politicians, instead of turning them out and managing things themselves. But Mr. Harrington is going to be a senator as soon as he can, and he is so clever that I am sure he will make a great reform.

“I don't think of anything else to say just now, but if I do I will write again—only it's unfeminine to write two letters running, so you must answer at once. And if you should want to travel this winter you can come here; they will treat you ever so much better than you deserve. So good-bye.

“Yours ever sincerely,

“JOE THORN.”

The precise nature of the friendship that existed between Josephine Thorn and Ronald Surbiton, could not be accurately inferred from the above specimen of correspondence; and

indeed the letter served rather to confuse than to enlighten the recipient as to the nature of his relations with the writer. He was, of course, very much in love with Joe Thorn; he knew it, because he had always been in love with her since they were children together, so there could be no possible doubt in the matter. But whether she cared a jot for him and his feelings, he could not clearly make out from the style of the hurried, ungrammatical sentences, crammed with abbreviations and unpermissible elisions. True, she said three times that she hoped he would come to America; but America was a long way off, and she very likely reckoned on his laziness and dislike to foreign travelling. It is so easy for a young woman writing from Boston to say to a young man residing in Scotland, "Do come over for a few days"—Surbiton thought it would be a good joke to take her at her word and go. The idea of seeing her again so much sooner than he had expected was certainly uppermost in his mind as he began to make his resolution; but it was sustained and strengthened by a couple of allusions Joe had made to men of her ac-



quaintance in Boston, not to say by the sweeping remark that there were more clever men in Boston society than anywhere else, which made his vanity smart rather unpleasantly. When Josephine used to tell him, half in earnest, half in jest, that he was "so dreadfully stupid," he did not feel much hurt; but it was different when she took the trouble to write all the way from America to tell him that the men there were much cleverer than at home. He had a great mind to go and see for himself whether it were true. Nevertheless the hunting was particularly good just at the time when he got the letter, and being rather prudent of counsel, Ronald determined to wait till a hard frost should spoil his temper and give the necessary stimulus to his activity, before he packed his boxes for a western voyage.

As for Josephine, it was very natural that she should feel a little homesick, and wish to have some one of her own people with her. In spite of the favourable views she expressed about America, Boston, and her new acquaintances, her position was not without some drawbacks in her own eyes. She felt herself out of

her natural element, and the very great admiration she received in society, though pleasant enough in itself, was not to her so entirely satisfactory as it would have been to a woman older or younger than she, or to a more thorough flirt. An older woman would have enjoyed more keenly the flattery of it; a younger girl would have found it more novel and fresh, and the accomplished professional society flirt—there is no other word to express her—would have rejoiced exceedingly over a great holocaust of victims.

In writing to Surbiton and suggesting to him to come to Boston, Joe had no intention of fanning his hopes into flame. She never thought much about Ronald. She had long been used to him, and regarded him in the light of a marriage fixture, though she had never exactly promised to marry him; she had been brought up to suppose she would, and that was all. When or where the marriage would actually take place was a question she did not care to raise, and if ever Surbiton raised it she repressed him ruthlessly. For the present she would look about the world, seeing she had been transported into a new part of it, and she

found it amusing. Only she would like to have a companion to whom she could talk. Ronald would be so convenient, and after all it was a great advantage to be able to make use of the man to whom she was engaged. She never had known any other girl who could do that, and she rather prided herself on the fact that she was not ridiculous, although she was in the most traditionally absurd position, that of betrothal. She would like to compare Ronald with the men she had met lately.

The desire for comparison had increased of late. A fortnight had passed since she had first met John Harrington, and she had made up her mind. He was handsome, though his hair was red and he had no beard—and she liked him; she liked him very much—it was quite different from her liking for Ronald. She liked Ronald, she said to herself that she loved him dearly, partly because she expected to marry him, and partly because he was so good and so much in love with herself. He would take any amount of trouble for anything she wanted. But John was different. She knew very well that she was thinking much more of him than he

of her, if indeed he thought of her at all. But she was a little ashamed of it, and in order to justify herself in her own eyes she was cold and sarcastic in her manner to him, so that people noticed it, and even John Harrington himself, who never thought twice whether his acquaintances liked him or disliked him, remarked one day to Mrs. Wyndham that he feared he had offended Miss Thorn, as she took such particular pains to treat him differently from others. On the other hand Joe was always extremely candid to Pocock Vancouver.

It was on a Monday that John made the aforesaid remark. All Boston was at Mrs. Wyndham's, excepting all the other ladies who lived in Beacon Street, and that is a very considerable portion of Boston, as every schoolboy knows. John was standing near the tea-table talking to Mrs. Sam, when Joe entered the room and came up to the hostess, who welcomed her warmly. She nodded coldly to John without shaking hands, and joined a group of young girls near by.

"It is very strange," said John to Mrs. Wyndham. "I wonder whether I can have

done anything Miss Thorn resents. I am not sensitive, but it is impossible to mistake people when they look at one like that. She always does it just in that way."

Mrs. Wyndham looked inquiringly at John for a moment, and the quick smile of ready comprehension played on her sensitive mouth.

"Are you really quite sure you have not offended her?" she asked.

"Quite sure," John answered, in a tone of conviction. "Besides, I never offend any one, certainly not ladies. I never did such a thing in my whole life."

"Not singly," said Mrs. Wyndham, laughing. "You offend people in large numbers when you do it at all, especially newspaper people. Sam read that ridiculous article in the paper to me last night."

"Which paper?" asked John, smiling. "They have most of them been at me this week."

"*The paper,*" answered Mrs. Sam, "the horrid paper. You do not suppose I would mention such a publication in my house."

"Oh, my old enemy," laughed John. "I do

not mind that in the least. One might almost think those articles were written by Miss Thorn."

"Perhaps they are," answered Mrs. Wyndham. "Really," she added, glancing at Josephine, whom Pocock Vancouver had just detached from her group of girls, "really you may not be so very, very far wrong." John's glance followed the direction of her eyes, and he saw Vancouver. He looked steadily at the man's delicate pale features and intellectual head, and at the end of half a minute he and Mrs. Wyndham looked at each other again. She probably regretted the hint she had carelessly dropped, but she met Harrington's gaze frankly.

"I did not mean to say it," she said, for John looked so grave that she was frightened. "It was only a guess."

"But have you any reason to think it might be the truth?" asked John.

"None whatever—really none, except that he differs so much from you in every way, politically speaking." She knew very well that Vancouver hated John, and she had often thought it possible that the offensive articles

in question came from the pen of the former. There was a tone of superior wit, and a ring of truer English in them than are generally met with in the average office work of a daily newspaper.

"I do not believe Vancouver writes them," said John slowly. "He is not exactly a friend, but he is not an enemy either."

Mrs. Wyndham, who knew better than that, held her peace. She was not a mischief-maker, and moreover she liked both the men too well to wish a quarrel between them. She busied herself at the tea-table for a moment, and John stood near her, watching the moving crowd. Now and then his eyes rested on Josephine Thorn's graceful figure, and he noticed how her expressive features lighted up in the conversation. John could hear something of their conversation, which was somewhat noisy. They were talking in that strain of objectless question and answer which may be stupid to idiocy or clever to the verge of wit, according to the talkers. Joe called it "chaff."

"I have learned America," said Joe.

"Indeed!" said Vancouver. "You have not

been long about it; but then, you will say there is not much to learn."

"I never believe in places till I have lived in them," said Joe.

"Nor in people till you have seen them, I suppose," returned Vancouver. "But now that you have learned America, of course you believe in us all without exception. We are the greatest nation on earth—I suppose you have heard that?"

"Yes; you told me so the other day; but it needs all the faith I have in your judgment to believe it. If any one else had said it, you know, I should have thought there was some mistake."

"Oh no; it is pretty true, taking it all round," returned Vancouver with a smile. "But I am tremendously flattered at the faith you put in my sayings."

"Oh, are you? That is odd, you know, because if you are so much flattered at my believing you, you would not be much disappointed if I doubted you."

"I beg to differ. Excuse me—"

"Not at all," answered Joe, laughing. "Only



we have old-fashioned prejudices at home. We begin by expecting to be believed, and are sometimes a good deal annoyed if any one says we are telling fibs."

"Of course, if you put it in that way," said Vancouver. "But I suppose it is not a very bad fib to say one's country is the greatest on earth. I am sure you English say it quite as often and as loudly as we do, and, you see, we cannot both be right, possibly."

"No, not exactly. But suppose two men, any two, like you and Mr. Harrington for instance, each made a point of telling every one you met that you were the greatest man on earth."

"It is conceivable that we might both be wrong," said Vancouver, laughing at the idea.

"But one of you might be right," objected Joe.

"No—that is not conceivable," retorted Vancouver.

"No? Let us ask Mr. Harrington. Mr. Harrington!" Joe turned towards John and called him. He was only a step from her, and joined the two instantly. He looked from one to the other inquiringly.

"Here is a great question to be decided, Mr. Harrington," said Joe. "I was saying to Mr. Vancouver that, supposing each of you asserted that he was the greatest man on earth, it would—I mean, how could the point be settled?" John stared for a moment.

"If you insist upon raising such a very remarkable point of precedence, Miss Thorn," he answered calmly, "I am sure Vancouver will agree with me to leave the decision to you also."

Joe looked slightly annoyed. She had brought the retort on herself.

"Pardon me," said Vancouver, quickly, "I object to the contest. The match is not a fair one. Mr. Harrington means to be the greatest man on earth, or in the water under the earth, whereas I have no such aspiration."

Instead of being grateful to Vancouver for coming to her rescue in the rather foolish position in which she was placed, Joe felt unaccountably annoyed. She was willing to make game of John herself, if she could, but she was not prepared to allow that privilege to any one else. Accordingly she turned upon Vancouver before John could answer.

"The question began in a foolish comparison, Mr. Vancouver," she said coldly. "I think you are inclined to make it personal."

"I believe it became personal from the moment you hit upon Mr. Harrington and me as illustrations of what you were saying, Miss Thorn," retorted Vancouver, very blandly, but with a disagreeable look in his eyes. He was angry at Joe's rebuke.

John stood calmly by without exhibiting the least shade of annoyance. The chaff of a mere girl, and the little satirical thrusts of a lady's man like Vancouver, did not seem to him of much importance. Joe, however, did not vouchsafe any answer to Vancouver's last remark, and it devolved on John to say something to relieve the awkwardness of the situation.

"Have you become reconciled to our methods of amusement, Miss Thorn?" he asked, "or shall we devise something different from the everlasting sleighing and five o'clock tea, and dinner parties and 'dancing classes'?"

"Oh, do not remind me of all that," said Joe. "I did not mean half of it, you know." She

turned to John, and Vancouver moved away in pursuit of Sybil Brandon, who had just entered the room.

"Tell me," said Joe, when Pocock was gone, "do you like Mr. Vancouver? You are great friends, are you not?" John looked at her inquiringly.

"I should not say we were very great friends," he answered, "because we are not intimate; but we have always been on excellent terms, as far as I know. Vancouver is a very clever fellow."

"Yes," said Joe, thoughtfully, "I fancy he is. You do not mind my having asked, do you?"

"Not in the least," said John, quietly. His face had grown very grave again, and he seemed suddenly absorbed by some thought. "Let us sit down," he said presently, and the two installed themselves on a divan in a corner.

"You are not in the least inquisitive," remarked Joe, as soon as they were settled.

"What makes you say that?" asked John.

"It was such a silly thing, you know, and you never asked what it was all about."

"When you called me? No—I did not hear

what led up to it, and I supposed from what you said afterwards that I understood."

"Did you? What did you think?" asked Joe.

"I thought from the question about Vancouver that you wanted to put us into an awkward position in order to find out whether we were friends."

"No," said Joe with a little laugh, "I am not so clever as that. It was pure silliness—chaff, you know—that sort of thing."

"Oh," ejaculated John, still quite unmoved, "then it was not of any importance."

"Very silly things sometimes turn out to be very important. Saul, you know—was not it he?—was looking for asses and he found a kingdom." John laughed suddenly.

"And so it is clear which part Vancouver and I played in the business," he said. "But where is the kingdom?"

"I did not mean that," said Joe, seriously. "I am not making fun any more. I have not been successful in my chaff to-day. I should think that in your career it would be very important for you to know who are your friends. Is it not?"

"Certainly," said John, looking at her curiously. "It is very important ; but I think political life is generally much simpler than people suppose. It is rather like fighting. The man who hits you is your enemy. The man who does not is practically your friend. Do you mean in regard to Vancouver ?"

"Yes."

"Vancouver never hit me, that I am aware," said John, "and I am very sure I never hit him."

"I dare say I am mistaken," said Joe. "You ought to know best. Let us leave him alone."

"With all my heart," answered John.

"Tell me what you have been doing, Mr. Harrington," said Joe, after a moment's pause ; "all the papers are full of you."

"Yes, I have been rather in the passive mood during the last week. I have been standing up to be shot at."

"Without shooting back ? What are they so angry about ?"

"The truth," said John, calmly. "They do not like to hear it."

"What is truth—in this instance ?"

“Apparently something so unpleasant that the mere mention of it has roused the bile of every penny-a-liner in the Republican press. I undertook to demonstrate that one of the fifteen millions of ‘ablest men in the country,’ whom you are always hearing about, is a swindler. He is, but he does not like to be told so.”

“I suppose not,” said Joe. “I wonder if any one likes unpleasant truths. But what do you mean to do now? Are you going to fight it out? I hope so!”

“Of course, in good time. One can hardly retire from such a position as mine; they would make an end of me in a week and quarrel over my bones. But the real fight will be fought by-and-by, when the elections come on.”

“How exciting it must all be,” said Joe. “I wish I were a man!”

“And an American?” asked John, smiling. “How are the mighty fallen! You were laughing at us and our politics the day before yesterday, and now you are wishing you were one of us yourself. I think you must be naturally fond of fighting—”

"Fond of a row?" suggested Miss Thorn with a laugh. "Yes, I fancy I am. I am fond of all active things. Are not you?"

"I do not know," said John. "I never thought much about it. But I suppose I should be called rather an active person."

"Is not she beautiful?" ejaculated Miss Thorn, looking across the room at Sybil Brandon, whose fair head was just visible between two groups of people.

"Who?" asked John, who was looking at his companion.

"Miss Brandon," said Joe. "Look at her, over there. I think she is the most beautiful thing I ever saw."

"Yes," said John, "she is very beautiful."



## CHAPTER IV.

ALL sorts and conditions of men and women elbowed and crowded each other under the dim gaslight at the three entrances to the Boston Music Hall. The snow was thick on the ground outside, and it had been thawing all the afternoon. The great 'booby' sleighs slid and slipped and rocked through the wet stuff, the policeman vociferated, the horse-car drivers on Tremont Street rang their bells furiously, and a great crowd of pedestrians stumbled and tumbled about in the mud and slush and snow of the crossings, all bent on getting inside the Music Hall in time for the beginning of the lecture.

The affair was called a 'lecture' in accordance with the time-honoured custom of Boston, and unless it were termed an oration it would be hard to find a better name for it. A 'meeting'

implies a number of orators, or at least a well-filled row of chairs upon the platform. A 'lecture,' on the other hand, does not convey to the ordinary mind the idea of a political speech, and critical persons with a taste for etymology say that the word means something which is read.

John Harrington had determined to speak in public on certain subjects connected with modern politics, and had caused the fact to be extensively made known. His name alone would have sufficed to draw a large audience, but the great attention he had attracted by his doings for some time past, and the severe criticisms lately made upon him by the local press, rendered the interest even greater than it would otherwise have been. Moreover, the lecture was free. Harrington was a poor man, as fortunes go in Boston, but it was his chiefest principle that a man had no right to be paid for speaking the truth, even though it might sometimes be just that people should pay something for hearing it. Accordingly the lecture was free, and at the appointed hour the house was full to overflowing.

In the front row of the first gallery sat old Miss Schenectady, and by her side was Josephine Thorn. A little colony of 'Beacon Street' had collected there, and Pocock Vancouver was not far off. It is not often that Beacon Street goes to such lectures, but John was one of themselves, and had too many friends and enemies among them not to be certain of a large attendance.

Miss Schenectady was there, partly because she believed in John Harrington, and partly because Joe insisted upon going; and, generally speaking, what Joe insisted upon was done. The old lady did not understand why her niece was so very anxious to be present, but as the proposition fell in with her own desires, she made no objection. The fact was that Joe's interest in John had very greatly increased of late, and her curiosity to hear the man she met so often speak to a great audience was excited to its highest pitch. She fancied, too, from many things she had heard said, that a large proportion of his audience would be hostile to him, and that she would see him roused to his greatest strength and eloquence. She did not consider her impulse in the least, for though

she felt a stronger interest in Harrington than she had ever before felt in any individual, it had not struck her that she was beginning to care overmuch for the sight of his face and the sound of his voice. She could not have believed she was beginning to love him; and if any secret voice had suggested to her conscience that it was so, she could have silenced it at once to her own satisfaction by merely remembering the coldness with which she generally treated him. She had got into the habit of treating him in that way from the first, when she had been prejudiced against him, and the annoyance she often felt at his indifference made her think that she ought to be consistent and never allow her formal manner to change. Unfortunately she now and then forgot herself, as she had done after the little skirmish with Vancouver at Mrs. Wyndham's, and then she talked to him and asked him questions of himself almost as though he were an intimate friend.

John, who was a man of the world as well as a man of talent, thought she was capricious, and since he was infinitely removed from falling in

love with her, or indeed with any other woman, he found it agreeable to talk to her when she was in a good humour, and when she was ungracious he merely kept out of her way. If he had deliberately made up his mind to attract her attention and interest, he could have chosen no surer way than this. But although he admired her beauty and vivacity, and now and then took a real pleasure in her conversation, his mind was too full of other matters to receive any lasting impression of such a kind. Besides, she was capricious, and he hated mere caprice.

And now there was a hush in the house, and then a short burst of applause, and Josephine, looking down, saw John standing alone upon the platform in front of the great bronze statue of Beethoven. He looked exactly as he did when she met him in society; there was no change in the even colour of his face, nor any awkwardness or self-consciousness in his easy attitude as he stood there, broad-shouldered and square, his strong hand just resting on the plain desk that had been placed in the middle of the stage. He waited a few seconds for silence in the audience, and then began to speak.

His voice sounded as natural and his accent as unaffected as though he were talking alone with a friend, saving only that every syllable he uttered was audible in the furthest gallery. Josephine leaned forward upon the red leather cushion of the railing before her, watching and listening intently.

She did not understand the subject well. John Harrington was a reformer, she knew; or, to speak more accurately, he desired to be one. He believed great changes were necessary. He believed in an established Civil Service, in something which, if not exactly Free Trade, was much nearer to it than the existing tariff. Above all, he believed in truth and freedom instead of lying and bribery. As he spoke and cleared the way to his main points, his voice never quavered or faltered. He was perfectly sure of himself, and he reserved all his strength for the time when it should be most required. For a quarter of an hour he proceeded, and the people sat in dead silence before him. Then he paused a moment, and shifted his position a little, moving a step forward as though to gain a better hearing.

"I am coming to the point," he said,—“the point that I must come to sooner or later. I am a Democrat, as perhaps some of you know.”

Here there was an uneasy movement in the house.

“Yes, I guess you are!” cried a voice from somewhere, in a tone of high nasal irony. Some one laughed, and some one hissed, and then there was silence again.

“Exactly,” continued John, unmoved by the interruption. “I am a Democrat, and though the sight does not astonish you so much as it might have done twenty years ago, it is worthy of remark, nevertheless. But I have a peculiarity which I think you will allow to be extremely novel. I do not begin by saying that salvation is only to be found with Democrats, and I will not believe any man who says it belongs exclusively to Republicans. If we were suddenly put in great danger of any kind, war, famine, or revolution, I think that in some way or other we should manage to save the country between us, Republicans and Democrats, for the common good.”



"That's so!" said more than one voice.

"Of course we should. Is there any one among us all who would not give up his individual views about a local election rather than see the country go to pieces? Would any man be such a coward as to be afraid to change his mind in order to prevent another Rebellion, another Civil War? No, no, we are more civilized than that. We want our own men in Congress, our own friends in office, just so long as they are serviceable—just so long as the country can stand it, if you like it in that way. But if it comes to be a question between the public good and having your cousin made postmaster in a country village, I think there is enough patriotism in the average Democrat or Republican to send the country cousin about his business. If worst comes to worst, we can save the country between us, depend upon it. We have done it before."

Here there was a burst of willing applause.

It is a great point to bring an audience into the position of applauding themselves.

Joe watched John's every gesture, and listened



intently to every word. His voice rang clear and strong through the great hall, and he was beginning to be roused. He had gained a decided advantage in the success of his last words, and as he gathered his strength for the real effort which was to come, his cheek paled and his grey eyes grew brighter. He spoke out again through the subsiding clamour.

“Now I say that the country is in danger. It is in very great danger, the greatest danger that can threaten any community. The institutions of a nation are like the habits of a man, except that they are harder to improve and easier to spoil. We have got into bad habits, and if we do not mend them they will take us to a more certain destruction than revolution, famine, or war,—or all three together. It is easier to fight a thing that has a head to it and a name, than a thing that is everywhere and has no name, because no one has the courage to christen it.

“We are like a man who has grown from being a pedler of tape and buttons to be the greatest dry-goods-man in his town, and then to being a great dealer for many towns. When

he was a pedler he could carry the profit and loss on his buttons and tape in his head, because the profits were literally in his pocket and the losses were literally out of it. But when he has grown into a great merchant he must keep books, and he must keep a great many of them, and they must be kept accurately, or he will get into trouble and go to ruin. That is true, is it not? And when he was a pedler he could buy his stock-in-trade himself, and be sure that it was what he wanted; but when he is one of the great merchants he must employ other people to help him, and unless they are the right people and understand the business, he will be ruined. Nobody can deny that.

“Very well. We began in a small way as a nation, without much stock-in-trade, and we kept our accounts by rule of thumb. But it seems to me we are doing a pretty large business as a nation just now.”

There was a laugh and sundry remarks to the effect that the audience understood what John was driving at.

“Yes, we are doing a great business, and to all intents and purposes we are doing it on false

business principles, and with an absolutely incompetent staff of clerks. What would you think of a merchant who dismissed all his book-keepers every four years, and engaged a set of shoemakers, or tailors, or artists, or musicians to fill up the vacancies?"

A low murmur ran through the hall, a murmur of disapprobation. Probably a large number out of the three thousand men and women present had cousins in country post offices. But John did not pause; his voice grew full and clear, ringing high above the dull sounds in the house. From her place in the gallery Josephine looked down, never taking her eyes from the face of the orator. She too was pale with excitement; had she been willing to acknowledge it, it was fear. That deep-toned beginning of a protest from the great concourse was like an omen of failure to her sensitive ear. She longed to see John Harrington succeed and carry his hearers with him into an access of enthusiasm. John expected no such thing. He only wanted the people to understand thoroughly what he meant, for he was sure that if once they knew the truth clearly they would feel for it as he himself did.

“Nevertheless,” he continued, “I tell you that is what we are doing, what we have been doing for years, from the very beginning. And if we go on doing it we shall get into trouble. We choose schoolboys to do the work of men, we expect that by the mere signature of the head of the executive any man can be turned into an accomplished public officer fit to be compared with one whose whole life has been spent in the public service. We wish to be represented abroad among foreign nations in a way becoming to our dignity and very great power, and we select as our ministers a number of gentlemen who in most cases have never read a diplomatic despatch in their lives, and who sometimes are not even acquainted with any language save their own. Perhaps you will say that our dignity is not of much importance provided our power is great enough. I do not think you will say it, but there are communities in our country where it would most certainly be said. Very well, so be it. But where do you think our power comes from? Do you think there is a boundless store of some natural product called power, of which we need only take

as much as we want in order to stand a head and shoulders higher than any other nation in the world? What is power? Can a man be strong if he has an internal disease, or is his strength any use to him if his arms and legs are out of joint? Would you believe in the strength of a great firm that hired a company of actors from a theatre, and made the tragedian cashier and the low-comedy man head book-keeper?

“The sick man may live for years with his sickness, and the man whose limbs are all distorted may still deal a formidable blow with his head, if it is thick enough. The firm may prosper for a time with its staff of theatrical clerks, provided there is enough business to pay for all their mistakes and leave a margin of profit. But the sick man does not live because he is diseased, but in spite of it. The distorted joints of the cripple do not help him to fight. The firm is not rich because its business is done by tragedians and walking-gentlemen, but in spite of them. If the doctor fails to give his medicine, if the fighting grows too rough for the cripple, if business grows slack, or if some good business man with competent assistants starts a

strong opposition—what happens? What must inevitably happen? Why, the sick man dies, the cripple gets the worst of it, and the theatrical firm of merchants goes straight into bankruptcy.

“And so I tell you that we are in danger. We are sick with the foul disease of office seeking; we are crippled hand and foot not only for fighting but for working, because our public officers are inexperienced men who spend four years in learning a trade not theirs, and are very generally turned out before they have half learnt it; we are doing a political business which will succeed fairly well just so long as we are rich enough to provide funds for any amount of extravagance and keep enough in our pockets to buy bread and cheese with afterwards. Just so long.

“When we have been lanced here in Boston and the blood is running freely, we can still cut a slice out of the West and use it like court-plaster to stop the bleeding. Some day there will be no more slices to be had. It will be a bad day in State Street.”\*

\* State Street, the principal business thoroughfare of Boston, corresponding to Wall Street in New York.

This remark raised a laugh and a good deal of noise for a moment. But the audience were soon silent again. Whether they meant to approve or disapprove, they kept their opinions to themselves. Miss Thorn did not comprehend the allusion, but she was listening with all her ears.

“You understand that,” John went on “Then understand it about the rest of the country as well. Understand that we are all the time patching our income with our capital ; and it answers pretty well because there is a good deal of capital and not so very many of ourselves, as yet. There will be twice as many of us in a few years, and very much less than half as much capital. Understand above all that we are getting into bad habits—habits we should despise in a corporation, and condemn by very bad names in any individual man of our acquaintance.

“And when you have understood it, look at matters as they stand. Look at the incompetence of our public officers, look at our ruined carrying trade, at those vile enactments of fools, and worse than fools, the Navigation Laws of the

United States, and tell me whether things are as they should be. Tell me what has become of liberty if you cannot buy a ship where you can get her best and cheapest, and hoist your own flag upon her, and call her your own? You may pay for her and bring her home with you, but though she were ten times paid for, you cannot hoist the American flag, nor register her in your own port, nor claim the protection of your country for your own property—because, forsooth, the ship was not built on American stocks, where she would cost three times her value, and put a job into the hands of a set of builders of river steamboats and harbour mudscows.”

Loud murmurs ran through the audience, and cries of “That’s so!” and counter cries of “Free-trader!” were heard on all sides. John’s great voice rang out like a trumpet. He knew the sensitiveness of his townsmen on the point.

“I am not speaking against protection,” he said, and at the magic word ‘protection’ a dead silence again fell over the vast crowd. “I say to you, ‘Protect!’ Protect, all of you, merchants, tradesmen, the great body of the commerce of



this country, protect whatever you all decide together needs protection. But by the greatness and the power you have, by the heaven that gave us this land of ours to till and to enjoy, protect also yourselves and your liberties."

A patriotic phrase, in the mouth of a man who has the golden gift of speech, coupled with the statement of a principle popular with his audience, is a sure point in an oration. Something in John's tone and gesture touched the sympathetic chord, and the house broke out in a great cry of applause. An orator cannot always talk in strict logical sequence. He must search about for the right nail till he has found it, and then drive it home.

"Aye, that is the point," he said. "You men of Boston here, look to your harbours, crowded with English craft, and think of what is gone lost to you for ever, unless you will strike a blow for it. Many of you are old enough to remember how it used to be. Look at Salem Harbour, at Marblehead. Where are the fleets of noble ships that lay side by side along the great docks, the ships that did half the carrying trade of the world? Where are the great merchantmen

that used to sail so grandly away to the East and that came home so richly laden? They are sunk or gone to pieces, or sold as old timber and copper and nails to the gentlemen who build mudscows. What are the great merchants doing who owned those fleets? They are employing their time in building railroads with English iron and foreign labour into desolate deserts in the West, which they hope to sell at a handsome profit, and probably will. But when there are no more desolate deserts and English iron and foreign labour to be had, they will wish they had their ships again, and that in all these years they had got possession of the carrying trade of the world, as they might have done.

“That is what I am here to say. The time is come to give up the shifts and unstable expedients that we needed, or thought we needed, in our early beginnings. Let us pull down all these scaffoldings and stages that have helped us to build, and let us see whether our fabric will stand upon its base, erect, without the paltry support of a few rotting timbers. Let us substitute the permanent for the transitory, the stable for the unstable, and the reality for

the sham. Let us have a Civil Service in fact as well as in name, a service of men trained to their duties, and who shall spend their lives in fulfilling them ; a service of competent men to represent us abroad, and a service of honest men to do the country's business at home, instead of making the country do theirs and being paid for it into the bargain. Let us put men into Congress who will cover the seas with our ships again, as well as make our harbours impassable with a competition of cheap ferry-boats. Begin here, as you began here more than a hundred years ago, and as you succeeded then you will succeed now.

“Begin, and go on, and God prosper you ; and when the work is done, when bribery and extortion and all corruption are crushed for ever out of our public life, when the Navigation Act is a thing of the past, and you are again the carriers of the world's commerce as well as the greatest sharers in it—then it will be time enough to give a name to the men who shall have done all these things, Republicans and Democrats together, a new party, the last and the greatest of all parties that the country

has ever seen. You will find a name, surely enough, that will answer the purpose then; but whatever that name may be, it will not be forgotten that, for the third time in the history of our land, Massachusetts has struck the first and the strongest blow in the struggle for liberty, honour, and truth."

Few men in public life had as good a right as John Harrington to denounce all manner of dishonesty. Many a speaker would have raised a sneering laugh by that last phrase, but even John's enemies admitted that his hands were clean. Coming from one of themselves it was a strong appeal, and the applause was long and loud. With a courteous inclination John turned and left the platform through the door at the back.

He was well enough satisfied. His hearers had been moved for a moment to enthusiasm. They would go home and on mature reflection would not agree with him; but a blow struck is a point in the fight so long as it is felt at all, and John was well pleased at the reception he had met with. He had avoided every detail, and had confined himself to the widest generali-

ties, but his homely illustrations would not be forgotten, and his strong individuality had created a sincere desire in many who had been there that night to hear him speak again.

For some minutes after John had left the platform, Josephine sat unmoved in her seat beside her aunt, lost in thought as she watched the surging crowd below.

"Well," said Miss Schenectady, "you have heard John Harrington now." Joe started. She had grown used to the implied interrogation her aunt usually conveyed in that way.

"He is a great man, Aunt Zoë," she said quietly, and looked round. There was a moisture in her beautiful brown eyes that told of great excitement. She was very pale too, and looked tired.

"Yes, my dear," said Aunt Zoruah. "But we had better go home right away, Joe darling. You are so pale, I suppose you must be a good deal used up."

"Allow me to see you to your carriage," said Pocock Vancouver in dulcet tones, coming up to the two ladies as they rose.

## CHAPTER V.

“WHY can't you get in, Mr. Vancouver?” inquired Miss Schenectady when she and Joe were at last packed into the deep ‘booby.’ It was simply a form of invitation. There was no reason why Mr. Vancouver should not get in, and with a word of thanks he did so. Ten minutes later the three were seated round the fire in Miss Schenectady's drawing-room.

“It was very fine, was it not, Miss Thorn?” said Vancouver.

“Yes,” said Joe, staring at the fire.

“There are some people,” said Miss Schenectady, “it does not seem to make much difference what they say, but it is always fine.”

“Is that ironical?” asked Vancouver.

“Why, goodness gracious no! Of course

not! I am John Harrington's very best friend. I only mean to say."

"What, Aunt Zoë?" inquired Joe, not yet altogether accustomed to the peculiar implications of her aunt's language.

"Why, what I said, of course; it sounds very fine."

"Then you do not believe it all?" asked Vancouver.

"I don't understand politics," said the old lady. "You might ring the bell, Joe, and ask Sarah for some tea."

"Nobody understands politics," said Vancouver. "When people do there will be an end of them. Politics consist in one half of the world trying to drive paradoxes down the throats of the other half."

Joe laughed a little.

"I do not know anything about politics here," she said, "though I do at home, of course. I must say, though, Mr. Harrington did not seem so very paradoxical."

"Oh no," answered Vancouver, blandly, "I did not mean in this case. Harrington is very much in earnest. But it is like war, you see.

When every one understands it thoroughly it will stop by universal consent. Did you ever read Bulwer's 'Coming Race'?"

"Yes," said Joe. "I always read those books. *Vril* and that sort of thing, you mean? Oh yes."

"Approximately," answered Vancouver. "It was an allegory, you know. A hundred years hence people will write a book to explain what Bulwer meant. *Vril* stands for the cumulative power of potential science, of course."

"I think Bulwer's word shorter, and a good deal easier to understand," said Joe, laughing.

"It is a great thing to be great," remarked Miss Schenectady. "Sarah, I think you might bring us some tea, please, and ask John if he couldn't stir the furnace a little. And then to have people explain you. Goethe must be a good deal amused, I expect, when people write books to prove that Byron was Euphorion." Miss Schenectady was fond of German literature, and the extent of her reading was a constant surprise to her niece.

"What a lot of things you know, Aunt Zoë!"



said Joe. "But what had Bulwer to do with war, Mr. Vancouver?"

"Oh, in the book—the 'Coming Race,' you know—they abolished war because they could kill each other so easily."

"How nice that would be!" exclaimed Joe, looking at him.

"Why, you perfectly shock me, Joe," cried Miss Schenectady.

"I mean, to have no war," returned Joe, sweetly.

"Oh; I belonged to the Peace Conference myself," said her aunt, immediately pacified. "Well, yes. Perhaps you could bring us a little cake, Sarah? War is a terrible thing, my dear, as Mr. Vancouver will tell you."

Vancouver, however, was silent. He probably did not care to have it remembered that he was old enough to carry a musket in the Rebellion. Joe understood and asked no questions about it, and Vancouver was grateful for her tact. She rose and began to pour out some tea.

"You began talking about Mr. Harrington's

speech," said she presently, "but we got away from the subject. Is it all true?"

"That is scarcely a fair question, Miss Thorn," answered Vancouver. "You see, I belong to the opposite party in politics."

"But Mr. Harrington said he wanted both parties to combine. Besides, you do not take any active part in it all."

"I have very strong opinions, nevertheless," replied Pocock.

"Strong opinions and activity ought to go together," said Joe.

"Not always."

"But if you have strong opinions and disagree with Mr. Harrington," persisted Miss Thorn, "then you have a strong opinion against your two parties acting together for the common good."

"Not exactly that," said Vancouver, embarrassed between the directness of Joe's question and a very strong impression that he had better not say anything against John Harrington.

"Then what do you believe? Will you please give this cup to Miss Schenectady?"

Vancouver rose quickly to escape.

"Cream and sugar, Miss Schenectady?" he said. "Ah, Miss Thorn has already put them in. It is such celebrated tea of yours! Do you know, I always look forward to a cup of it as one of the greatest pleasures in life!"

"When you have quite done praising the tea will you please tell me what you believe about Mr. Harrington's speech?" said the inexorable Joe, drowning her aunt's reply to Vancouver's polite remark.

Thus cornered Vancouver faced the difficulty.

"I believe it was a very good speech," he said mildly.

"Do you believe what he said was true?"

"A great deal of it was true, but I assure you that Harrington is very enthusiastic. Much of it was extremely imaginative."

"I dare say; all that about making a Civil Service, I suppose?"

"Well, not exactly. I think all good Republicans hope to have a regular Civil Service some day. It is necessary, or will be so before long."

"But then it is what he said about that ridiculous Navigation Act that you object to?" pursued Joe, without mercy.

"Really I think it would be an advantage to repeal it. It is only kept up for the sake of a few builders who have influence."

"Ah, I see," exclaimed Joe triumphantly, "you think the hope he expressed that bribery and that sort of thing might be suppressed was altogether imaginary?"

"I hope not, Miss Thorn. But I am sure there is not nearly so much of it as he made out. It was a very great exaggeration."

"Was there? Really he only used the word once in the most general way. I remember very well, at the end; he said, 'when bribery, corruption, and all extortion are crushed for ever;' anybody might say that!"

"You make out a wonderfully good case, Miss Thorn," said Vancouver, who was not altogether pleased; "was the speech printed before Harrington spoke it this evening?"

"No!" exclaimed Joe. "I have a very good memory, in that way, just to remember what I hear. I could repeat word for word everything he said, and everything you have said since during the evening."

"What a terrible person you are!" said Van-

couver, smiling pleasantly. "Well then, now that you have proved every word of Harrington's speech out of an opponent's evidence, I will tell you frankly how it is that I do not agree with him. He is a Democrat, I am a Republican. That is the whole story. I do not believe, nor shall I ever believe, that any large number of the two parties can work together. I cannot help my belief in the least; it is a matter of conscience. Nevertheless, I have a very great respect for Harrington, and as I take no active part whatever in any political contest, my opinion of his politics will never interfere with my personal feeling for him."

Frankness seemed to be Mr. Vancouver's strong point. Joe was obliged to admit that he spoke clearly, even if she did not greatly respect his logic. During all this time, Miss Schenectady had been sipping her tea in silence.

"Joe," she said at last, "you are a perfect Socrates for questions. You ought to have been a lawyer."

"I wish I were," said Joe, laughing, "or Socrates himself."

"Yes, you ought to have been. Here you know nothing at all about this thing, and you have been talking like anything for half-an-hour. I think Socrates was perfectly horrid."

"So do I," said Vancouver, laughing aloud.

"Why?" Joe asked, turning to her aunt.

"To be always stopping people in the street, and button-holing them with his questions. Of course it was very clever, as Plato makes it out; but I do wish he could have met me—when I was young, my dear. I would have answered him once and for all!"

"Try me, Aunt Zoë, for practice," said Joe, "until you meet him."

"Really, I expect you would do almost as well. Look at Mr. Vancouver, he is quite used up."

The case was not so serious with Mr. Vancouver as the old lady made it out to be. He was silent and to all intents vanquished for the present, but it was not long before he turned the conversation to other things, and succeeded in making himself very agreeable. He admired Josephine very much, and though she occasionally made him feel very uncomfortable,

he always returned to the charge with renewed intelligence and sweetness. Joe liked him too, in spite of an unfounded suspicion she felt that he was dangerous. He was always ready when she needed anything at a party; he never bored her, but whenever he saw she was wearied by any one else he came up and saved her, clearing a place for himself at her side with an ease that bespoke long and constant experience of the world. Women, especially young women, always like men of that description; they are flattered at the attention of a man who is so evidently able to choose, and they enjoy the immunity from all annoyance and weariness that such men are able to carry with them.

Consequently Joe accepted the attentions of Pocock Vancouver with a certain amount of satisfaction, and she had not been displeased that he should come to Miss Schenectady's house for tea. The evening passed quickly, and Vancouver took his leave. As he opened the front door to let himself out he nearly fell over a small telegraph messenger.

"Thorn here?" inquired the boy, laconically.

"Yes, I'll take it in," said Vancouver quickly. He went back with the telegram, and the boy stood inside the door waiting for the receipt. He noticed the stamp of the Cable Office on the envelope.

"Miss Thorn," said Vancouver, entering the drawing-room again, hat in hand, "I just met this telegram on the steps, so I brought it in. It may need an answer, you know."

"Thanks so much," said Joe, tearing open the pale yellow cover. She was startled, not being accustomed to receive telegrams. Her brow contracted as she read the contents, and she tapped her small foot on the carpet impatiently.

"Thorn, care Schenectady. Beacon, Boston.

Sailed to-day. Ronald."

Josephine crushed the paper in her hand and signed the receipt with the pencil Vancouver offered her.

"Thanks so much," she said again, but in a different tone of voice.

"Any answer?" suggested Vancouver.



"Thanks, no," answered Joe. "Good night again."

"Good night." And Vancouver departed, wondering what the message could have been.

Miss Schenectady had looked on calmly throughout the little scene, and nodded to Pocock as he left the room; her peculiarities were chiefly those of diction; she was a well-bred old lady, not without wisdom.

"Nothing wrong, Joe?" she inquired, when alone with her niece.

"I hardly know," answered Joe. "Ronald has just sailed from England. I suppose he will be here in ten days."

"Business here?" asked Miss Schenectady.

"Oh dear, no! He knows nothing about business. I wish he would stay at home. What a bore!"

It was evident that Joe had changed her mind since she had written to Ronald a fortnight before. It seemed to her now, when she looked forward to Surbiton's coming, that he would not find his place in Boston society so easily as she had done. Of course he would expect to see her every day, and to spend all

his leisure hours at Miss Schenectady's house. Whatever she happened to be doing, it would always be necessary to take Ronald into consideration, and the prospect did not please her at all.

Ronald was a dear good fellow, of course, and she meant to marry him in the end—at least, she probably would. But then—she intended to marry him at a more convenient season, some time in the future. She knew him well, and she was certain that when he saw her surrounded by her Boston acquaintances, his British nature would assert itself, and he would claim her, or try to claim her, and persuade her to go away. She bid Miss Schenectady good night, and went to her room; and presently, when she was sure every one was in bed in the house, she stole down to the drawing-room again, and sat alone by the remains of the coal-fire, thinking what she should do.

Josephine Thorn was young and more full of life and activity than most girls of her age. She enjoyed what came in her way to enjoy with a passionate zest, and she had the reputation of being somewhat capricious and changeable.

But she was honest in all her thoughts, and very clear-sighted. People often said she spoke her mind too freely, and was not enough in awe of the veiled deity known in society as 'The Thing.' How she hated it! How many times she had been told that what she said and did was not quite 'The Thing.' She knew now what Ronald would say when he came if he found her worshipped on all sides by Pocock Vancouver and his younger and less accomplished compeers. Ronald would say "it was rather rough, you know."

She sat by the fire and thought the matter over, and when she came to formulating in her mind the exact words that Ronald would say, she paused to think of him and how he would look. He was handsome—far handsomer than Vancouver or—or John Harrington. He was very nice; much nicer than Vancouver. John Harrington was different, 'nice' did not describe him; but Ronald was nicer than all the other men she knew. He would make a charming husband. At the thought Joe started.

"My husband!" she repeated aloud to herself

in the silence. Then she rose quickly to her feet and leaned against the smooth white marble mantelpiece, and buried her face in her small white hands for an instant.

“Oh no, no, no, no!” she cried aloud. “It is impossible; oh no! never! I never really meant it; did I?” She stared at herself in the glass for a few seconds, and her face was very pale. Then she bent over her hands again, and the tears came and wetted them a little, and at last she sat down as she had sat before, and stared vacantly at the fire.

It would be very wrong to break Ronald’s heart, she thought. He would come to her so full of hope and gladness; how could she tell him she did not love him?

But how was it possible that in all these years she had never before understood that she could not marry him? It had always seemed so natural to marry Ronald. And yet she must have always really felt just as she did to-night; only she had never realized it, never at all. Why had it come over her so suddenly too? It would have been so much better if she could have seen the truth at home, before

she parted from him; for it would be so hard for him to bear it now, after coming across the ocean to see her—so cruelly hard. Dear Ronald; and yet he must be told.

Yes, there was no doubt about it, the very first meeting must explain it to him. He would say—what would he say? He would tell her she liked some one else better.

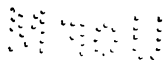
Some one else! Some one who had stolen away her heart; of course he would say that. But he would be wrong, for there was no one else, not one of all these men she had seen, who had so much as breathed a word of love to her. None whom she liked nearly so much as Ronald, no, not one.

For a long time she sat very quietly, following a train of thought that was half unconscious. Her lips moved now and then, as though she were repeating something to herself, and gradually the pained and anxious expression of her face melted away into a look of peace.

The old gilt clock upon the chimney-piece struck twelve in its shrill steel tones. Josephine started at the sound, and passed one hand over her eyes as though to rouse herself,

and at the same time a deep blush spread over her delicate cheek. For with the voice of midnight there was also the voice of a man ringing in her ears, and she heard the two together, so that it seemed as though all the world must hear them also, and her gentle maiden's soul was shamed at the thought.

So it is that our loves are always with us, and though we search ourselves diligently to find them and rebuke them, we find them not; but if we give up searching they come upon us unawares, and speak very soft words. Love also is a gentle thing, full of sweetness and peace, when he comes to us so; and though the maiden blushes at his speaking, she would not stop the ears of her heart against him for all the world; and although the boy trembles and turns pale, and forgets to be boyish when the fit is on him, nevertheless he goes near and worships, and loses his heart in learning a new language. So kind and soft is love, so tender and sweet-spoken, that you would think he would not so much as ruffle the leaf of a rose, nor breathe too sharply on a violet, lest he should hurt the flower-soul within; and if you



treat him hospitably he is kind to the last, so that when he is gone there is still a sweet savour of him left. But if you would drive him roughly away with scorn and rude language, he will stand at your door and will not leave you. Then his wings drop from him, and he grows strong and fierce, and deadly and beautiful, as the fallen archangel of heaven, crying aloud bitter things to you by day and night; till at the last he will break down bolt and bar and panel, and enter your chamber, and drag you out with him to your death in the wild darkness.

But Josephine blushed deeply there in the old-fashioned drawing-room at midnight, and as she turned away she wondered at herself, for she could not believe nor understand what was happening.

Poor girl! She had talked of love so often as an abstract thing, she had seen so many love-makings of others, and so many men had tried to make love to her in her short brilliant life, and she had always thought it could not come near her, because, of course, she really loved Ronald. She had marvelled, indeed, at what people were willing to do, and at what

they were ready to sacrifice, for a feeling that seemed to her of such little importance as that. It had been an illusion, and the waking had come at last very suddenly. Whoever it might be whom she was destined to take, it was not Ronald. It was madness to think she could be bound for ever to him, however much she might admire him and desire him as a friend.

When the clock struck she was thinking of John, and the words he had said that night to his great audience were ringing again in her ears. She blushed indeed at the idea that she was thinking so much of him, but it was not that she believed she loved him. If as yet she really did, she was herself most honestly unconscious of it; and so the blush was not accounted for in the reckoning she made.

She lay awake long, trying to determine what was best to be done, but she could not. One thing she must do; she must explain to Ronald, when he came, that she could never, never marry him.

If only she had a sister, or some one! Dear Aunt Zoruiah was so horrid about such things that it was impossible to talk to her!



## CHAPTER VI.

“Do you know how to skate?” Sybil Brandon asked of Joe as the two young girls, clad in heavy furs, walked down the sunny side of Beacon Street two days later. They were going from Miss Schenectady’s to a ‘lunch party’—one of those social institutions of Boston which had most surprised Joe on her first arrival.

“Of course,” answered Joe. “I do not know anything, but I can do everything.”

“How nice!” said Sybil. “Then you can go with us to-night. That will be too lovely!”

“What is it?”

“We are all going skating on Jamaica Pond. Nobody has skated for so long here that it is a novelty. I used to be so fond of it.”

“We always skate at home, when there is

ice," said Joe. "It will be enchanting though, with the full moon and all. What time?"

"Mrs. Sam Wyndham will arrange that," said Sybil. "She is going to matronize us."

"How dreadful, to have to be chaperoned!" ejaculated Joe. "But Mrs. Wyndham is very jolly after all, so it does not much matter."

"I believe they used to have Germans here without any mothers," remarked Sybil, "but they never do now."

"Poor little things, how awfully lonely for them!" laughed Joe.

"Who?"

"The Germans—without their mothers. Oh, I forgot the German was the cotillon. You mean cotillons, without tapestry, as we say."

"Yes, exactly. But about the skating party. It will be very select, you know; just ourselves. You know I never go out," Sybil added rather sadly, "but I do love skating so."

"Who are 'ourselves'—exactly?"

"Why, you and I, and the Sam Wyndhams, and the Aitchison girls, and Mr. Topeka, and Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Vancouver—let me see—and Miss St. Joseph, and young Hannibal.

He is very nice, and is very attentive to Miss St. Joseph."

"Is it nice, like that, skating about in couples?" asked Joe.

"No; that is the disagreeable part; but the skating is delicious."

"Let us stay together all the time," said Joe spontaneously, "it will be ever so much pleasanter. I would not exactly like to be paired off with any of those men, you know."

Sybil looked at Joe, opening her wide blue eyes in some astonishment. She did not think Joe was exactly one of those young women who object to a moonlight *tête-à-tête*, if properly chaperoned.

"Yes, if you like, dear," she said. "I would like it much better myself, of course."

"Do you know, Sybil," said Joe, looking up at her taller companion, "I should not think you would care for skating and that sort of thing."

"Why?" asked Sybil.

"You do not look strong enough. You are not a bit like me, brought up on horseback."

"Oh, I am very strong," answered Sybil,

"only I am naturally pale, you see, and people think I am delicate."

But the north wind kissed her fair face and the faint colour came beneath the white and through it, so that Joe looked at her and thought she was the fairest woman in the world that day.

"When I was a little girl," said Joe, "mamma used to tell me a story about the beautiful Snow Angel; she must have been just like you, dear."

"What is the story?" asked Sybil, the delicate colour in her cheek deepening a little.

"I will tell you to-night when we are skating, we have not time now. Here we are." And the two girls went up the steps of the house where they were going to lunch.

On the other side of the street Pocock Vancouver and John Harrington met, and stopped to speak just as Joe and Sybil had rung the bell, and stood waiting at the head of the steps.

"Don't let us look at each other so long as we can look at them," said Vancouver, shaking

hands with John, but looking across the street at the two girls. John looked too, and both men bowed.

"They are pretty enough for anything, are they not?" continued Vancouver.

"Yes," said John, "they are very pretty."

With a nod and a smile Joe and Sybil disappeared into the house.

"Why don't you marry her?" asked Vancouver.

"Which? The English girl?"

"No; Sybil Brandon."

"Thank you, I am not thinking of being married," said John, a half-comic, half-contemptuous look in his strong face. "Miss Brandon could do better than marry a penniless politician, and besides, even if I wanted it, I care too much for Miss Brandon's friendship to risk losing it by asking her to marry me."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said Vancouver, "she would accept you straight off. So would the other."

"You ought to know," said John, eyeing his companion calmly.

Vancouver looked away; it was generally

believed that he had been refused by Miss Brandon more than a year previous.

“Well, you can take my word for it, you could not do better,” he answered, ambiguously. “There is no knowing how the moonlight effects on Jamaica Pond may strike you this evening. I say, though, you were pretty lucky in having such warm weather the night before last.”

“Yes,” said John. “The house was full. Were you there?”

“Of course. If I were not a Republican I would congratulate you on your success. It is a long time since any one has made a Boston audience listen to those opinions. You did it surprisingly well; that sentence about protection was a masterpiece. I wish you were one of us.”

“It is of no use arguing with you,” said John. “If it were, I could make a Democrat of you in an afternoon.”

“I make a pretty good thing of arguing, though,” answered the other. “It’s my trade, you see, and it is not yours. You lay down the law; it is my business to make a living out of it.”

"I wish I *could* lay it down, as you say, and lay it down according to my own ideas," said John. "I would have something to say to you railroad men."

"As for that, I should not care. Railroad law is stronger than iron and more flexible than india-rubber, and the shape of it is of no importance whatever. So long as there is enough of it to work with, you can twist it and untwist it as much as you please."

John laughed.

"It would simplify matters to untwist it and cut it up into lengths," he said. "But then your occupation would be gone."

"I think my occupation will last my lifetime," answered Vancouver, laughing in his turn.

"Not if I can help it," returned John. "But we can provide you with another. Good-bye. I am going to Cambridge."

They shook hands cordially, and John Harrington turned down Charles Street, while Vancouver pursued his way up the hill. He had been going in the opposite direction when he met Harrington, but he seemed to have changed his mind. He was not seen again

that day until he went to dine with Mrs. Sam Wyndham.

There was no one there but Mr. Topeka and young John C. Hannibal, well-dressed men of five-and-thirty and five-and-twenty respectively, belonging to good families of immense fortune, and educated regardless of expense. No homely Boston phrase defiled their anglicised lips, their great collars stood up under their chins in an ecstasy of stiffness, and their shirt-fronts bore two buttons, avoiding the antiquity of three and the vulgarity of one. Well-bred Anglo-maniacs both, but gentlemen withal, and courteous to the ladies. Mr. Topeka was a widower. John C. Hannibal was understood to be looking for a wife.

They came, they dined, and they retired to Sam Wyndham's rooms to don their boots and skating clothes. At nine o'clock the remaining ladies arrived, and then the whole party got into a great sleigh and were driven rapidly out of town over the smooth snow to Jamaica Pond. John Harrington had not come, and only three persons missed him—Joe Thorn, Mrs. Sam, and Pocock Vancouver.



The ice had been cut away in great quantities for storing and the thaw had kept the pond open for a day or two. Then came the sharpest frost of the winter, and in a few hours the water was covered with a broad sheet of black ice that would bear any weight. It was a rare piece of good fortune, but the fashion of skating had become so antiquated that no one took advantage of the opportunity; and as the party got out of the sleigh and made their way down the bank, they saw that there was but one skater before them, sweeping in vast solitary circles out in the middle of the pond, under the cold moonlight. The party sat on the bank in the shadow of some tall pine trees, preparing for the amusement, piling spare coats and shawls on the shoulders of a patient groom, and screwing and buckling their skates on their feet.

“What beautiful ice!” exclaimed Joe, when Vancouver had done his duty by the straps and fastenings. She tapped the steel blade twice or thrice on the hard black surface, still leaning on Vancouver’s arm, and then, without a word of warning, shot away in a long sweeping roll. The glorious vitality in her was all alive, and

her blood thrilled and beat wildly in utter enjoyment. She did not go far at first, but seeing the others were long in their preparations, she turned and faced them, skating away backwards, leaning far over to right and left on each changing stroke, and listening with intense pleasure to the musical ring of the clanging steel on the clean ice. Some pride she felt, too, at showing the little knot of Bostonians how thoroughly at home she was in a sport they seemed to consider essentially American.

Joe had not noticed the solitary skater and thought herself alone, but in a few moments she was aware of a man in an overcoat bowing before her as he slackened his speed. She turned quickly to one side and stopped herself, for the man was John Harrington.

"Why, where did you come from, Mr. Harrington?" she asked in some astonishment. "You were not hidden under the seats of the sleigh were you?"

"Not exactly," said John, looking about for the rest of the party. "I was belated in Cambridge this afternoon, so I borrowed a pair of skates and walked over. Splendid ice, is it not?"

"I am so glad you came," said Joe. She was in such high spirits and was so genuinely pleased at meeting John that she forgot to be cold to him. "It would have been a dreadful pity to have missed this."

"It would indeed," said John, skating slowly by her side.

For down by the pine trees two or three figures began to move on the ice.

"I want to thank you, Mr. Harrington," said Joe.

"What for, Miss Thorn?" he asked.

"For the pleasure you gave me the other night," she answered. "I have not seen you since to speak to. It was splendid!"

"Thanks," said John. "I saw you there, in the gallery on my left."

"Yes; but how could you have time to look about and recognize people? You must have splendid eyes."

"It is all a habit," said John. "When one has been before an audience a few times one does not feel nervous, and so one has time to look about. Do you care for that sort of thing, Miss Thorn?"

"Oh, ever so much. But I was frightened once, when they began to grumble."

"There was nothing to fear," said John, laughing. "Audiences of that kind do not punctuate one's speeches with cabbages and rotten eggs."

"They do sometimes in England," said Joe. "But here come the others!"

Two and two, in a certain grace of order, the little party came out from the shore into the moonlight. The women's faces looked white and waxen against their rich furs, and the moonbeams sparkled on their ornaments. A very pretty sight is a moonlight skating party, and Pocock Vancouver knew what he was saying when he hinted at the mysterious and romantic influences that are likely to be abroad on such occasions. Indeed it was not long before young Hannibal was sliding away hand in hand with Miss St. Joseph at a pace that did not invite competition. And Mr. Topeka decided which of the Aitchison girls he preferred, and gave her his arm, so that the other fell to the lot of Sam Wyndham, while Mrs. Sam and Sybil Brandon came out escorted by

Vancouver, who noticed with some dismay that the party was "a man short." The moment he saw Joe talking to the solitary skater he knew that the latter must be Harrington, who had gone to Cambridge and come across. John bowed to every one and shook hands with Mrs. Wyndham. Joe eluded Vancouver and put her arm through Sybil's, as though to take possession of her.

Joe would have been well enough pleased at first to have been left with John, but the sight of Vancouver somehow reminded her of the compact she had made in the morning with Sybil, and in a few moments the two girls were away together, talking so persistently to each other that Vancouver, who at first followed them and tried to join their conversation, was fain to understand that he was not wanted, so that he returned to Mrs. Wyndham.

"I want so much to talk to you," Joe began, when they were alone.

"Yes, dear?" said Sybil, half interrogatively, as they moved along. "We can talk here charmingly, unless Mr. Vancouver comes after

us again. But you do skate beautifully, you know. I had no idea you could."

"Oh, I told you I could do everything," said Joe, with some pride. "Where *did* you get that beautiful fur, my dear? It is magnificent. You are just like the Snow Angel now."

"In Russia. Everybody wears white fur there, you know. We were in St. Petersburg some time."

"I know. We cannot get it in England. If one could I would have told Ronald to bring me some when he comes."

"Who is Ronald?" asked Sybil innocently.

"Oh, he is the dearest boy," said Joe, with a little sigh, "but I do so wish he were not coming!"

"Because he has not got the white fur?" suggested Sybil.

"Oh no! But because—" Joe lowered her voice and spoke demurely, at the same time linking her arm more closely in Sybil's,— "You see, dear, he wants to marry me, and I am afraid he is coming to say so."

"And you do not want to marry him? Is that it?"

Joe's small mouth closed tightly, and she merely nodded her head gravely, looking straight before her. Sybil pressed her arm sympathetically and was silent, expecting more.

"It was such a long time ago, you see," said Joe, after a while. "I was not out when it was arranged, and it seemed so natural. But now—it is quite different."

"But of course, if you do not love him, you must not think of marrying him," said Sybil, simply.

"I won't," answered Joe, with sudden emphasis. "But I shall have to tell him, you know," she added despondently.

"It is very hard to say those things," said Sybil, in a tone of reflection. "But of course it must be done—if you were really engaged, that is."

"Yes, almost really," said Joe.

"Not quite?" suggested Sybil.

"I think not quite; but I know he thinks it is quite quite, you know."

"Well, but perhaps he is not so certain, after all. Do you know, I do not think men really care so much; do you?"

"Oh, of course not," said Joe scornfully. "But it does not seem quite honest to let a man think you are going to marry him if you do not mean to."

"But you did mean to, dear, until you found out you did not care for him enough. And just think how dreadful it would be to be married if you did not care enough!"

"Yes, that is true," answered Joe. "It would be dreadful for him too."

"When is he coming?" asked Sybil.

"I think next week. He sailed the day before yesterday."

"Then there is plenty of time to settle on what you want to say," said Sybil. "If you make up your mind just how to put it, you know, it will be ever so much easier."

"Oh no!" cried Joe. "I will trust to luck. I always do; it is much easier."

"Excuse me, Miss Brandon," said the voice of Vancouver, who came up behind them at a great pace, and holding his feet together let himself slide rapidly along beside the two girls,— "excuse me, but do you not think you are very unsociable, going off in this way?"



"May I give you my arm, Miss Thorn?" asked Harrington, coming up on the other side.

Without leaving each other Joe and Sybil took the proffered arms of the two men, and the four skated smoothly out into the middle of the ice, that rang again in the frosty air under their joint weight. Mrs. Wyndham had insisted that Vancouver and Harrington should leave her and follow the young girls, and they had obeyed in mutual understanding.

"Which do you like better, Miss Brandon, boating in Newport or skating on Jamaica Pond?" asked Vancouver.

"This is better than the Music Hall, is it not?" remarked John to Miss Thorn.

"Oh, Jamaica Pond, by far," Sybil answered, and her hold on Joe's arm relaxed a very little.

"Oh no! I would a thousand times rather be in the Music Hall!" exclaimed Joe, and her hand slipped away from Sybil's white fur. And so the four were separated into couples, and went their ways swiftly under the glorious moonlight. As they parted Sybil turned her

head and looked after Joe, but Joe did not see her.

“I would rather be here,” said John quietly.

“Why?” asked Joe.

“There is enough fighting in life to make peace a very desirable thing sometimes,” John answered. “A man cannot be always swinging his battle-axe.” There was a very slight shade of despondency in the tone of his voice. Joe noticed it at once.

Women do not all worship success, however much they may wish their champion to win when they are watching him fight. In the brilliant, unflinching, all-conquering man the woman who loves him feels pride; if she be vain and ambitious, she feels wholly satisfied, for the time. But woman's best part is her gentle sympathy, and where there is no room at all for that there is very often little room for love. In the changing hopes and fears of uncertain struggles a woman's love well given and truly kept may turn the scale for a man, and it is at such times, perhaps, that her heart is given best, and most loyally held by him who has it.

"I wish I could do anything to help him to succeed," thought Joe, in the innocent generosity of her half-conscious devotion.

"Has anything gone wrong?" she asked aloud.

## CHAPTER VII.

“HAS anything gone wrong?”

There was so much of interest and sympathy in her tone, as Joe put the simple question, that John turned and looked into her face. The magic of moonlight softens the hardest features, makes interest look like friendship, and friendship like love; but it can harden too at times, and make a human face look like carved stone.

“No, there is nothing wrong,” John answered presently; “what made you think so?”

“You spoke a little regretfully,” answered Joe.

“Did I? I did not mean to. Perhaps one is less gay and less hopeful at some times than at others. It has nothing to do with success or failure.”

“I know,” answered Joe. “One can be

dreadfully depressed when one is enjoying oneself to any extent. But I should not have thought you were that sort of person. You seem always the same."

"I try to be. That is the great difference between people who live to work and people who live to amuse and be amused."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean," said John, "that people who work, especially people who have to do with large ideas and great movements, need to be more or less monotonous. The men who succeed are the men of one idea, or at least they are the men who only have one idea at a time."

"Whereas people who live to amuse and be amused must have as many ideas as possible—"

"Yes, to play with," said John, completing the sentence. "Their life is play, their ideas are their playthings, and so soon as they have spoiled one toy they must have another. The people who supply ideas to an idle public are very valuable, and may have great power."

"Novel-writers and that sort of people," suggested Joe.

"All producers of light literature and second-

rate poetry, and a very great variety of other people besides. A man who amuses others may often be a worker himself. He raises a laugh or excites a momentary interest by getting rid of his superfluous ideas and imaginations, reserving to himself all the time the one idea in which he believes."

"Not at all a bad theory," said Joe.

"There are more men of that sort with you in Europe than with us. You need more amusement, and you will generally give more for it. You English, who are uncommonly fond of doing nothing, give yourselves vast trouble in the pursuit of pleasure. We Americans, who are ill when we are idle, are content to surround ourselves with the paraphernalia of pleasure when office hours are over; but we make very little use of our opportunities for amusement, being tired out at the end of the day with other things which we think more important. The result is that we have no such thing as what you denominate 'Society,' because we lack the prime element of aristocratic social intercourse, the ingrained determination to be idle."

"You are very hard on us," remarked Joe.

"Excuse me," returned John, "you are compensated by having what we have not. Europeans are the most agreeable people in the world, wherever mutual and daily conversation and intercourse are to be considered. The majority of you, of polite European society, are not troubled with any very large ideas, but you have an immense number of very charming and attractive small ones. In America there are only two ideas that practically affect society, but they are very big ones indeed."

"What?" asked Joe laconically, growing interested in John's queer lecture.

"Money and political influence," answered John Harrington. "They are the two great motors of our machine. All men who are respected among us are in pursuit of one or the other, or have attained to one or the other by their own efforts. The result is, that European society is amusing and agreeable; whereas Americans of the same class are more interesting, less polished, better acquainted with the general laws that govern the development of nations."

"Really, Mr. Harrington," said Joe, "you are making us out to be very insignificant. And I think it would be very dull if we all had to understand ever so many general laws. Besides, I do not agree with you."

"About what, Miss Thorn?"

"About Americans. They talk better than Englishmen, as a rule."

"But I am comparing Americans with the whole mass of Europeans," John objected. "The English are a rather silent race, I should say."

"Cold, you think?" suggested Joe.

"No, not cold. Perhaps less cold than we are; but less demonstrative."

"I like that," answered Joe. "I like people to feel more than they show."

"Why?" asked John. "Why should not people be perfectly natural, and show when they feel anything, or be cold when they do not?"

"I think when you know some one feels a great deal and hides it, that gives one the idea of reserved strength."

They had reached a distant part of the ice,



and were slowly skating round the limits of a little bay, where the slanting moonbeams fell through tall old trees upon the glinting black surface. They were quite alone, only in the distance they could hear the long-drawn clang and ring of the other skaters, echoing all along the lake with a tremulous musical sound in the still bright night.

"You must be very cold yourself, Mr. Harrington," Joe began again after a pause, stopping and looking at him.

John laughed a little.

"I?" he cried. "No, indeed, I am the most enthusiastic man alive."

"You are when you are speaking in public," said Joe. "But that may be all comedy, you know. Orators always study their speeches, with all the gestures and that, before a glass, don't they?"

"I do not know," said John. "Of course I know by heart what I am going to say, when I make a speech like that of the other evening, but I often insert a great deal on the spur of the moment. It is not comedy. I grow very much excited when I am speaking."

"Never at any other time?" asked Joe.

"Seldom; why should I? I do not feel other things or situations so strongly."

"In other words," replied Joe, "it is just as I said; you are generally very cold."

"I suppose so," John acquiesced, "since you will not allow the occasions when I am not cold to be counted."

Joe looked down as she stood, and moved her skates slowly on the ice; the shadows hid her face.

"Do you know," she said presently, "you lose a great deal; you must, you cannot help it. You only like people in a body, so as to see what you can do with them. You only care for things on a tremendously big scale, so that you may try to influence them. When you have not a crowd to talk to, or a huge scheme to argue about, you are bored to extinction."

"No," said John; "I am not bored at present, by any means."

"Because you are talking about big things. Most men in your place would be talking about the moonlight, and quoting Shelley."

"To oblige you, Miss Thorn, I could quote

a little now and then," said John, laughing. "Would it please you? I dare say you have seen elephants stand upon their hind legs and their heads alternately. I should feel very much like one; but I will do anything to oblige you."

"That is frivolous," said Joe, who did not smile.

"Of course it is. I am heavy by nature. You may teach me all sorts of tricks, but they will not be at all pretty."

"No, you are very interesting as you are," said Joe quietly. "But I do not think you will be happy."

"It is not a question of happiness."

"What is it then?"

"Usefulness," said John.

"You do not care to be happy, you only care to be useful?" Joe asked.

"Yes. But my ideas of usefulness include many things. Some of the people who listen to me would be very much astonished if they knew what I dream."

"Nothing would astonish me," said Joe, thoughtfully. "Of course you must think of

everything in a large way—it is your nature. You will be a great man.”

John looked at his companion. She had struck the main chord of his nature in her words, and he felt suddenly that thrill of pleasure which comes from the flattery of our pride and our hopes. John was not a vain man, but he was capable of being intoxicated by the grandeur of a scheme when the possibility of its realisation was suddenly thrust before him. Like all men of exceptional gifts who are constantly before the public, he could estimate very justly the extent of the results he could produce on any given occasion, but his enthusiastic belief in his ideas, could see no limit to the multiplication of those results. His strong will and natural modesty about himself constantly repressed any desire he might have to speak over-confidently of ultimate success, so that the prediction of ultimate success by some one else was doubly sweet to him. We Americans have said of ourselves that we are the only nation who accomplish what we have boasted of. Rash speech and rash action are our national characteristics, and lead us into all

manner of trouble, but in so far as such qualifications or defects imply a positive conviction of success, they contribute largely to the realisation of great schemes. No one can succeed who does not believe in himself, nor can any scheme be realised which has not gained the support of a sufficient number of men who believe in it and in themselves.

John was gratified by Miss Thorn's speech, for he saw that it was spontaneous.

"I will try to be great," he said, "for the sake of what I think is great."

There was a short pause, and the pair by common consent skated slowly out of the shadow into the broad moonlight.

"Not that I believe you will be happy if you think of nothing else," said Joe presently.

"In order to do anything well one must think of nothing else," answered John.

"Many great men find time to be great and to do many other things," said Joe. "Look at Mr. Gladstone; he has an immense private correspondence about things that interest him, quite apart from the big things he is always doing."

"When a man has reached that point he may find plenty of time to spare," answered Harrington. "But until he has accomplished the main object of his life he must not let anything take him from his pursuit. He must form no ties, he must have no interests, that do not conduce to his success. I think a man who enters on a political career must devote himself to it as exclusively as a missionary Jesuit attacks the conversion of unbelievers, as wholly as a Buddhist ascetic gives himself to the work of uniting his individual intelligence with the immortal spirit that gives it life."

"I do not agree with you," said Joe decisively, and in her womanly intelligence of life she understood the mistake John made. "I cannot agree with you. You are mixing up political activity, which deals with the government of men, with spiritual ideas and immortality, and that sort of thing."

"How so?" asked John, in some surprise.

"I am quite sure," said Joe, "that to govern man a man must be human, and the

imaginary politician you tell me of is not human at all."

"And yet I aspire to be that imaginary politician," said John.

"Do not think me too dreadfully conceited," Joe answered, "in talking about such things. Of course I do not pretend to understand them, but I am quite sure people must be like other people—I mean in good ways—or other people will not believe in them, you know. You are not vexed, are you?" She looked up into John's face with a little timid smile that might have done wonders to persuade a less prejudiced person than Harrington.

"No indeed! why should I be vexed? But perhaps some day you will believe that I am right."

"Oh no, never!" exclaimed Joe, in a tone of profound conviction. "You will never persuade me that people are meant to shut themselves from their fellow-creatures, and not be human, and that."

"And yet you were so good as to say that you thought I might attain greatness," said John, smiling.

“Yes, I think you will. But you will change your mind about a great many things before you do.”

John's strong face grew thoughtful, and the white moonlight made his features seem harder and sterner than ever. Slowly the pair glided over the polished black ice, now marked here and there with clean white curves from the skates, and in a few minutes they were once more within hail of the remainder of their party.



## CHAPTER VIII.

EIGHT days after the skating party, Ronald Surbiton telegraphed from New York that he would reach Boston the next morning, and Josephine Thorn knew that the hour had come. She was not afraid of the scene that must take place, but she wished with all her heart that it were over.

As Sybil Brandon had told her, there had been time to think of what she should say, and although she had answered recklessly that she would "trust to luck," she knew when the day was come that she had in reality thought intensely of the very words which must be spoken. To Miss Schenectady she had said nothing, but on the other hand she had become very intimate with Sybil, and to tell the truth, she hoped inwardly for the support and sympathy of her beautiful friend.

Meanwhile, since her long evening with John Harrington on the ice, she had made every effort to avoid his society. Like many very young women with a vivid love of enjoyment and a fairly wide experience, she was something of a fatalist. That is to say, she believed that her evil destiny might spring upon her unawares at any moment, and she felt something when she was with Harrington that warned her. For the first time in her life she knew what it was to have moods of melancholy; she caught herself asking what was really the end and object of her gay life, whether it amounted to anything worthy in comparison with the trouble one had to take to amuse oneself, whether it would not be far better in the end to live like Miss Schenectady, reading and studying and caring nothing for the world.

Not that Josephine admired Miss Schenectady, or thought that she herself could ever be like her. The old lady was a type of her class; intelligent and well versed in many subjects—even learned she might have been called by some. But to Joe's view, essentially European by nature and education, it seemed

as though her aunt, like many Bostonians, judged everything—literature, music, art of all kinds, history and the doings of great men—by one invariable standard. Her comments on what she heard and read were uniformly delivered from the same point of view, in the same tone of practical judgment, and with the same assumption of original superiority. It was the everlasting “*Carthago delenda*” of the Roman orator. Whatever the world wrote, sang, painted, thought, or did, the conviction remained unshaken in Miss Schenectady’s mind that Beacon Street was better than those things, and that of all speeches and languages known and spoken in the world’s history, the familiar dialect of Boston was the one best calculated by Providence and nature to express and formulate all manner of wisdom.

It is a strange thing that where criticism is on the whole so fair, and cultivation of the best faculties so general, the manner of expressing a judgment and of exhibiting acquired knowledge should be such as to jar unpleasantly on the sensibilities of Europeans. Where is the real difference? It probably lies in some

subtle point of proportion in the psychic chemistry of the Boston mind, but the analyst who shall express the formula is not yet born, though there be those who can cast the spectrum of Boston existence and thought upon their printed screens with matchless accuracy.

Joe judged but did not analyse. She said Miss Schenectady was always right, but that the way she was right was 'horrid.' Consequently she did not look to her aunt for sympathy or assistance, and though they had more than once talked of Ronald Surbiton since receiving his cable from England, Joe had not said anything of her intentions regarding him. When the second telegram arrived from New York, saying that he would be in Boston on the following morning, Joe begged that Miss Schenectady would be at home to receive him when he came.

"Well, if you insist upon it, I expect I shall have to," said Miss Schenectady. She did not see why her niece should require her presence at the interview; young men may call on young ladies in Boston without encountering the inevitable chaperon, or being obliged to do

their talking in the hearing of a police of papas, mammas, and aunts. But as Joe "insisted upon it," as the old lady said, she "expected there were no two ways about it." Her expectations were correct, for Joe would have refused absolutely to receive Ronald alone.

"I know the value of a stern aunt, my dear," she had said to Sybil the day previous.

When matters were arranged, therefore, they went to bed, and in the morning Miss Schenectady sat in state in the front drawing-room, reading the life of Mr. Ticknor until Ronald should arrive. Joe was up-stairs writing a note to Sybil Brandon, wherein the latter was asked to lunch and to drive in the afternoon. Ronald could not come before ten o'clock with any kind of propriety, and they could have luncheon early and then go out; after which the bitterness of death would be past.

It was not quite ten o'clock when Ronald Surbiton rang the bell, and was turned into the drawing-room to face an American aunt for the first time in his life.

"Miss Schenectady?" said he, taking the proffered hand of the old lady and then bowing

slightly. He pronounced her name Shenectaydy, with a strong accent on the penultimate syllable.

"Schenectady," corrected his hostess. "I expect you are Mr. Surbiton."

"A — exactly so," said Ronald, in some embarrassment.

"Well, we are glad to see you in Boston, Mr. Surbiton." Miss Schenectady resumed her seat, and Ronald sat down beside her, holding his hat in his hand.

"Put your hat down," said the old lady. "What sort of a journey did you have?"

"Very fair, thanks," said Ronald, depositing his hat on the floor beside him, "in fact I believe we came over uncommonly quick for the time of year. How is—"

"What steamer did you come by?" interrupted Miss Schenectady.

"The *Gallia*. She is one of the Cunarders. But as I was going to ask—"

"Yes, an old boat, I expect. So you came on right away from New York without stopping?"

"Exactly," answered Ronald. "I took the first train. The fact is, I was so anxious—so very anxious to—"

"What hotel are you at here?" inquired Miss Schenectady, without letting him finish.

"Brunswick. How is Miss Thorn?" Ronald succeeded at last in putting the question he so greatly longed to ask—the only one, he supposed, which would cause a message to be sent to Joe announcing his arrival.

"Joe? She is pretty well. I expect she will be down in a minute. Are you going to stay some while, Mr. Surbiton?"

Ronald thought Miss Schenectady the most pitiless old woman he had ever met. In reality she had not the most remote intention of being anything but hospitable. But her idea of hospitality at a first meeting seemed to consist chiefly in exhibiting a great and inquisitive interest in the individual she wished to welcome. Besides, Joe would probably come down when she was ready, and so it was necessary to talk in the mean time. At last Ronald succeeded in asking another question.

"Excuse the anxiety I show," he said simply, "but may I ask whether Miss Thorn is at home?"

"Perhaps if you rang the bell I could send for her," remarked the old lady in problematic answer.

"Oh, certainly!" exclaimed Ronald, springing to his feet, and searching madly round the room for the bell. Miss Schenectady watched him calmly.

"I think if you went to the further side of the fire-place you would find it—back of the screen," she suggested.

"Thanks; here it is," cried Ronald, discovering the handle in the wall.

"Yes, you have found it now," said Miss Schenectady with much indifference. "Perhaps you find it cold here?" she continued, observing that Ronald lingered near the fire-place.

"Oh dear, no, thanks, quite the contrary," he answered.

"Because if it is you might— Sarah, I think you could tell Miss Josephine that Mr. Surbiton is in the parlour, could not you?"

"Oh, if it is any inconvenience—" Ronald began, misunderstanding the form of address Miss Schenectady used to her handmaiden.



"Why?" asked Miss Schenectady, in some astonishment.

"Nothing," said Ronald, looking rather confused; "I did not quite catch what you said."

There was a silence, and the old lady and the young man looked at each other.

Ronald was a very handsome man, as Joe knew. He was tall and straight and deep-chested. His complexion was like a child's, and his fine moustache like silk. His thick fair hair was parted accurately in the middle, and his smooth white forehead betrayed no sign of care or thought. His eyes were blue and very bright, and looked fearlessly at every one and everything, and his hands were broad and clean-looking. He was perfectly well dressed, but in a fashion far less extreme than that affected by Mr. Topeka and young John C. Hannibal. There was less collar and more shoulder to him, and his legs were longer and straighter than theirs. Nevertheless, had he stood beside John Harrington, no one would have hesitated an instant in deciding which was the stronger man. With all his beauty and grace, Ronald Surbiton was but one of a

class of handsome and graceful men. John Harrington bore on his square brow and in the singular compactness of his active frame the peculiar sign-manual of an especial purpose. He would have been an exception in any class and in any age. It was no wonder Joe had wished to compare the two.

In a few moments the door opened, and Joe entered the drawing-room. She was pale, and her great brown eyes had a serious expression in them that was unusual. There was something prim in the close dark dress she wore, and the military collar of most modern cut met severely about her throat. If Ronald had expected a very affectionate welcome he was destined to disappointment; Joe had determined not to be affectionate until all was over. To prepare him in some measure for what was in store, she had planned that he should be left alone for a time with Miss Schenectady, who, she thought, would chill any suitor to the bone.

"My dear Ronald," said Joe, holding out her hand, "I am so glad to see you." Her voice was very even and gentle, but there was no gladness in it.

“Not half so glad as I am to see you,” said Ronald, holding her hand in his, his face beaming with delight. “It seems such an age since you left!”

“It is only two months, though,” said Joe, with a faint smile. “I ought to apologize, but I suppose you have introduced yourself to aunt Zoë.” She could not call her aunt Zoruaiah, even for the sake of frightening Ronald.

“What did you think when you got my telegram?” asked the latter.

“I thought it was very foolish of you to run away just when the hunting was so good,” answered Joe with decision.

“But you are glad, are you not?” he asked, lowering his voice, and looking affectionately at her. Miss Schenectady was again absorbed in the life of Mr. Ticknor.

“Yes,” said Joe, gravely. “It is as well that you have come, because I have something to say to you, and I should have had to write it. Let us go out. Would you like to go for a walk?”

Ronald was delighted to do anything that

would give him a chance of escaping from aunt Zoruah and being alone with Joe.

"I think you had best be back to lunch," remarked Miss Schenectady as they left the room.

"Of course, aunt Zoë," answered Joe. "Besides, Sybil is coming, you know." So they sallied forth.

It was a warm day; the snow had melted from the brick pavement, and the great icicles on the gutters and on the trees were running water in the mid-day sun. Joe thought a scene would be better to get over in the publicity of the street than in private. Ronald, all unsuspecting of her intention, walked calmly by her side, looking at her occasionally with a certain pride, mixed with a good deal of sentimental benevolence.

"Do you know," Joe began presently, "when your cable came I felt very guilty at having written to you that you might come."

"Why?" asked Ronald, innocently. "You know I would come from the end of the world to see you. I have, in fact."

"Yes, I know," said Joe wearily, wishing she

knew exactly how to say what she was so thoroughly determined should be said.

"What is the matter, Joe?" asked Ronald, suddenly. He smiled rather nervously, but his smooth brow was a little contracted. He anticipated mischief.

"There is something the matter, Ronald," she said at last, resolved to make short work of the revelation of her feelings. "There is something very much the matter."

"Well?" said Surbiton, beginning to be alarmed.

"You know, Ronald dear, somehow I think you have thought—honestly, I know you have thought for a long time that you were to marry me."

"Yes," said Ronald with a forced laugh, for he was frightened. "I have always thought so; I think so now."

"It is of no use to think it, Ronald dear," said Joe, turning very pale. "I have thought of it too—thought it all over. I cannot possibly marry you, dear boy. Honestly, I cannot." Her voice trembled violently. However firmly she had decided within herself, it was a

very bitter thing to say; she was so fond of him.

"What?" asked Ronald hoarsely. But he turned red instead of pale. It was rather disappointment and anger that he felt at the first shock than sorrow or deep pain.

"Do not make me say it again," said Joe, entreatingly. She was not used to entreating so much as to commanding, and her voice quavered uncertainly.

"Do you mean to say," said Ronald, speaking loudly in his anger, and then dropping his voice as he remembered the passers-by,—“do you mean to tell me, Joe, after all this, when I have come to America just because you told me to, that you will not marry me? I do not believe it. You are making fun of me.”

"No, Ronald," Joe answered sorrowfully, but regaining her equanimity in the face of Surbiton's wrath, "I am in earnest. I am very, very fond of you, but I do not love you at all, and I never can marry you."

Ronald was red in the face, and he trod fast and angrily, tapping the pavement with his stick. He was very angry, but he said nothing.

"It is much better to be honest about it," said Joe, still very pale; and when she had spoken her little mouth closed tightly.

"Oh, yes," said Ronald, who was serious by this time; "it is much better to be honest, now that you have brought me three thousand miles to hear what you have to say—much better. By all means."

"I am very sorry, Ronald," Joe answered. "I really did not mean you to come, and I am very sorry,—oh, more sorry than I can tell you,—but I cannot do it, you know."

"If you won't, of course you can't," he said. "Will you please tell me who he is?"

"Who?—what?" asked Joe, coldly. She was offended at the tone.

"The fellow you have pitched upon in my place," he said roughly.

Joe looked up into his face with an expression that frightened him. Her dark eyes flashed with an honest fire. He stared angrily at her as they walked slowly along.

"I made a mistake," she said slowly. "I am not sorry. I am glad. I would be ashamed to marry a man who could speak like that

to any woman. I am sorry for you, but I am glad for myself." She looked straight into his eyes, until he turned away. For some minutes they went on in silence.

"I beg your pardon, Joe," said Ronald presently in a subdued tone.

"Never mind, Ronald dear, I was angry," Joe answered. But her eyes were full of tears, and her lips quivered.

Again they went on in silence, but for a longer time than before. Joe felt that the blow was struck and there was nothing to be done but to wait the result. It had been much harder than she had expected, because Ronald was so angry; she had expected he would be pained. He, poor fellow, was really startled out of all self-control. The idea that Joe could ever ultimately hesitate about marrying him had never seemed to exist, even among the remotest possibilities. But he was a gentleman in his way, and so he begged her pardon, and chewed the cud of his wrath in silence for some time:

"Joe," he said at last, with something of his usual calm, though he was still red, "of course



you are really perfectly serious? I mean, you have thought about it?"

"Yes," said Joe; "I am quite sure."

"Then perhaps it is better we should go home," he continued.

"Perhaps so," said Joe, "Indeed, it would be better."

"I would like to see you again, Joe," he said in a somewhat broken fashion. "I mean, by-and-by, when I am not angry, you know."

Joe smiled at the simple honesty of the proposition.

"Yes, Ronald dear, whenever you like. You are very good, Ronald," she added.

"No, I am not good at all," said Ronald sharply, and they did not speak again until he left her at Miss Schenectady's door. Then she gave him her hand.

"I shall be at home until three o'clock," said she.

"Thanks," he answered; so they parted.

Joe had accomplished her object, but she was very far from happy. The consciousness of having done right did not outweigh the pain she felt for Ronald, who was, after all, her very

dear friend. They had grown up together from earliest childhood, and so it had been settled; for Ronald was left an orphan when almost a baby, and had been brought up with his cousin as a matter of expediency. Therefore, as Joe said, it had always seemed so very natural. They had plighted vows when still in pinafores with a ring of grass, and later they had spoken more serious things, which it hurt Joe to remember, and now they were suffering the consequence of it all, and the putting off childish illusions was bitter.

It was not long before Sybil Brandon came in answer to Joe's invitation. She knew what trouble her friend was likely to be in, and was ready to do anything in the world to make matters easier for her. Besides, though Sybil was so white and fair, and seemingly cold, she had a warm heart, and had conceived a very real affection for the impulsive English girl. Miss Schenectady had retired to put on another green ribbon, leaving the life of Mr. Ticknor open on the table, and the two girls met in the drawing-room. Joe was still pale, and the tears seemed ready to start from her eyes.

"Dear Sybil—it is so good of you to come," said she.

Sybil kissed her affectionately and put her arm round her waist. They stood thus for a moment before the fire.

"You have seen him?" Sybil asked presently. Joe had let her head rest wearily against her friend's shoulder, and nodded silently in answer. Sybil bent down and kissed her soft hair, and whispered gently in her ear,

"Was it very hard, dear?"

"Oh, yes—indeed it was!" cried Joe, hiding her face on Sybil's breast. Then, as though ashamed of seeming weak, she stood up boldly, turning slightly away as she spoke. "It was dreadfully hard," she continued; "but it is all over, and it is very much better—very, very much, you know."

"I am so glad," said Sybil, looking thoughtfully at the fire. "And now we will go out into the country and forget all about it—all about the disagreeable part of it."

"Perhaps," said Joe, who had recovered her equanimity, "Ronald may come too. You see

he is so used to me that after a while it will not seem to make so very much difference after all."

"Of course, if he would," said Sybil, "it would be very nice. He will have to get used to the idea, and if he does not begin at once, perhaps he never may."

"He will be just the same as ever when he gets over his wrath," answered Joe confidently.

"Was he very angry?"

"Oh, dreadfully! I never saw him so angry."

"It is better when men are angry than when they are sorry," said Sybil. "Something like this once happened to me, and he got over it very well. I think it was much more my fault, too," she added thoughtfully.

"Oh, I am sure you never did anything bad in your life," said Joe affectionately. "Nothing half so bad as this—my dear Snow-Angel!" And so they kissed again and went to lunch.

"I suppose you went to walk," remarked Miss Schenectady, when they met at table.

"Yes," said Joe, "we walked a little."

"Well, all Englishmen walk, of course," continued her aunt.

"Most of them can," said Joe, smiling.

"I mean, it is a great deal the right thing there. Perhaps you might pass me the pepper."

Before they had finished their meal the door opened, and Ronald Surbiton entered the room.

"Oh—excuse me," he began, "I did not know—"

"Oh, I am so glad you have come, Ronald," cried Joe, rising to greet him, and taking his hand. "Sybil, let me introduce Mr. Surbiton—Miss Brandon."

Sybil smiled and bent her head slightly. Ronald bowed and sat down between Sybil and Miss Schenectady.

## CHAPTER IX.

JOSEPHINE THORN never read newspapers, partly because she did not care for the style of literature known as journalistic, and partly, too, because the papers always came at such exceedingly inconvenient hours. If she had possessed and practised the estimable habit of "keeping up with the times," she would have observed an article which appeared on the morning after the skating party, and which dealt with the speech John Harrington had made in the Music Hall two days previous. Miss Schenectady had read it, but she did not mention it to Joe, because she believed in John Harrington, and wished Joe to do likewise, wherefore she avoided the subject; for the article treated him roughly. Nevertheless, some unknown person sent Joe a copy of the

paper through the post some days later, with a bright red pencil mark at the place, and Joe, seeing what the subject was, read it with avidity. As she read her cheek flushed, her small mouth closed like a vice, and she stamped her little foot upon the floor.

It was evident that the writer was greatly incensed at the views expressed by John, and he wrote with an ease and a virulence which proclaimed a practised hand.

“The spectacle of an accomplished Democrat,” said the paper, “is always sufficiently unusual to attract attention; but to find so rare a bird among ourselves is indeed a novel delight. The orator who alternately enthralled and insulted a considerable audience at the Music Hall two nights ago, laid a decided claim both to accomplishment and to democracy. He himself informed his hearers that he was a Democrat—and, indeed, it was necessary that he should state his position, for it would have been impossible to decide from the tone and quality of his opinions whether he were a socialist, a reformer, a conservative, or an Irishman. Perchance he has discovered the talisman

by which it is possible for a man to be all four, and yet to be a man. Furthermore, he claims to be an orator. No one could listen to the manifold intonations of his voice, or witness the declamatory evolutions of his body, without feeling an inward conviction that the gentleman on the platform intended to present himself to us as an orator.

“Lest we be accused of partiality and prejudice, we will at once state that we believe it possible for a man to be singular in his manner and quaint in his mode of phrasing, and yet to utter an opinion in some one direction which, if neither novel nor interesting, nor even tenable, shall yet have the one redeeming merit of representing a conceivable point of view. But when a man begins by stating that he belongs to the Democrats and then claims as his own the views of his political opponents, winding up by demanding the sympathy and support of a third party, the obvious conclusion is that he is either a lunatic, a charlatan, or both. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, neither can any man serve both the Irish and Chinese.



“Mr. John Harrington has made a great discovery. He has discovered that we require a Civil Service. This is apparently the ground on which he states himself to be a Democrat. If we remember rightly, the Civil Service Convention, which sat in discussion of the subject in the summer of 1881, was presided over by a prominent member of the Republican party. As some time has elapsed since then, and the gentlemen connected with the movement are as active and as much interested in it as ever, our orator will pardon us for questioning his right of discovery on the one hand, and his claim to be considered a Democrat on the strength of it, on the other. A Civil Service is doubtless a good thing—even a very good thing, and in due time we shall certainly have it; but that the Constitution of the United States is on the verge of dissolution at the hands of our corrupt public officers, that our finance is only another name for imminent bankruptcy, or that the new millennium of Washington morals will be organized by Mr. John Harrington—these things we deny *in toto*, from beginning to end. So wide and

deep is our scepticism, that we even doubt whether 'war, famine, revolution, or all three together' would have instantly ensued if Mr. John Harrington had not delivered his speech on Wednesday evening.

"In illustration—or rather, in the futile attempt to illustrate—Mr. Harrington put forth a series of similes that should make any dead orator turn in his grave. The nation was successively held up to our admiration in the guise of a sick man, a cripple, a banker, a theatrical company, and a pedler of tape and buttons. We were bankrupt, diseased, and our bones, like those of the Psalmist, were all out of joint, and if our hearts did not become like melting wax in the midst of our bodies, it was not the fault of Mr. John Harrington, but rather was it due to the hardening of those organs against the voice of the charmer.

"The Navigation Act called down the choicest of the orator's vessels of wrath. Fools had made it, worse than fools submitted to it, and the reason why the Salem docks were no longer crowded with the shipping of the Peabody family was that there were ferry-boats in

Boston harbour, a train of reasoning that must be clear to the mind of the merest schoolboy. Mr. Harrington further stated that these same ferry-boats—not to mention certain articles he terms ‘mudscows,’ with which we have no acquaintance—are built of old timber, copper, and nails, obtained by breaking up the fleets of the Peabody family, which is manifestly a fraud on the nation. As far as the ferry-boats are concerned, we believe we are in a position to state that they are not built of old material; as regards the aforesaid ‘mudscows’ we can give no opinion, not having before heard of the article, which we presume is not common in commerce, and may therefore be regarded as an exception to the universal rule that things in general should not be made of old timber, copper, and rusty nails.

“We will not weary our readers with any further attempt at unravelling the opinions, illustrations, and rhetoric of Mr. John Harrington, Democrat and orator. The possession of an abundant vocabulary without any especial use for it in the shape of an idea will not revolutionise modern government, whatever may be

the opinion of the individual so richly gifted ; nor will any accomplished Democrat find a true key to success in following a course of politics which consists in one half of the world trying to drive paradoxes down the throat of the other half. It will not do, and Mr. Harrington will find it out. He will find out also that the differences which exist between the Republican and the Democratic parties are far deeper and wider than he suspects, and do not consist in such things as the existence or non-existence of a Civil Service, free trade, or mudscows ; and when these things are for ever crushed out of his imagination it will be time enough to give him a name, seeing he is neither Republican nor Democrat, nor Tammany, nor even a Stalwart, nor a three-hundred-and-sixer — seeing, in fact, that he is not an astronomical point in any political heaven with which the world is acquainted, but only the most nebulous of nebulæ which have yet come within our observation.”

Joe read the article rapidly and then read the last paragraph again, and threw the paper aside. She sat by the fire after breakfast,

and Miss Schenectady had come into the room several times and had gone out again, busied with much housekeepin For Miss Schenectady belonged to the elder school of Boston women, who "see to things" themselves in the intervals of literature, gossip, and transcendental philosophy. But Joe sat still for nearly half-an-hour after she had done reading and nursed her wrath, while she toasted her little feet at the fire. At last she made up her mind and rose.

"I am going to see Sybil, Aunt Zoë," she said, meeting the old lady at the door.

"Well, if she is up at this time of day," answered Miss Schenectady.

"Oh, I fancy so," said Joe.

Mrs. Sam Wyndham's establishment was of the modern kind, and nobody was expected to attend an early breakfast of fish, beefsteaks, buckwheat cakes, hot rolls, tea, coffee, and chocolate at eight o'clock in the morning. Visitors did as they pleased, and so did Mrs. Sam, and they met at luncheon, a meal which Sam Wyndham himself was of course unable to attend. Joe knew this, and knew she was certain to find Sybil alone. It was Sybil she

wanted to see, and not Mrs. Wyndham. But as she walked down Beacon Street the aspect of affairs changed in her mind.

Joe had not exaggerated when she said to Vancouver that she had a very good memory, and it would have been better for him if he had remembered the fact. Joe had not forgotten the conversation with him in the evening after Harrington's speech, and in reading the article that had been sent to her she instantly recognized a phrase, word for word as Vancouver had uttered it. In speaking to her he had said that politics "consisted in one half of the world trying to drive paradoxes down the throat of the other half." It was true that in the article John Harrington was warned that he would discover the fallacy of this proposition, but in Joe's judgment this did not constitute an objection. Vancouver had written the article, and none other; Vancouver, who professed a boundless respect for John, and who constantly asserted that he took no active part whatever in politics. It was inconceivable that the coincidence of language should be an accident. Vancouver had

made the phrase when making conversation, and had used it in his article; Joe was absolutely certain of that, and being full of her discovery and of wrath, she was determined to consult with her dearest friend as to the best way of revenging the offence on its author.

But as she walked down Beacon Street she reflected on the situation. She was sure Sybil would not understand why she cared so much, and Sybil would form hasty ideas as to the interest Joe took in Harrington. That would never do. It would be better to speak to Mrs. Sam Wyndham, who was herself so fond of John that she would seize with avidity on the information, from whatever source it came. But then Mrs. Wyndham was fond of Vancouver also. No, she was not. When Joe thought of it she was sure that though Vancouver was devoted to Mrs. Sam, Mrs. Sam did not care for him excepting as an agreeable person of even temper, who was useful in society. But for Harrington she had a real friendship. If it came to the doing of a service, Mrs. Wyndham would do it. Joe's perceptions were wonderfully clear and just.

But when she reached the house she was still uncertain, and she passed on, intending to turn back and go in as soon as she had made up her mind. In spite of all that she could argue to herself it seemed unsafe—unwise, at least. Sybil might laugh at her, after all; Mrs. Wyndham might possibly tell Vancouver instead of telling John. It would be better to tell John herself; she remembered having once spoken to him about Vancouver, and she could easily remind him of the conversation. She would probably see him that evening at a party she was going to; and yet it was so hard to have to keep it all to herself for so many hours, instead of telling. Nevertheless she would go and see Sybil, taking care, of course, to say nothing about the article.

At the time Joe was walking up and down Beacon Street in the effort to come to a decision, John Harrington found himself face to face with a very much more formidable problem. He stood before the fire-place in his rooms in Charles Street, with an extinguished cigar between his teeth, his face paler than usual, and a look of uncertainty on his features



that was oddly out of keeping with his usual mood. He wore an ancient shooting coat, and his feet were thrust into a pair of dingy leather slippers; his hands were in his pockets, and he was staring vacantly at the clock.

On the oak writing-table that filled the middle of the room lay an open telegram. It was dated from Washington, and conveyed the simple information that Senator Caleb Jenkins had died at five o'clock that morning. It was signed by an abbreviation that meant nothing except to John himself. The name of the senator was itself fictitious, and stood for another which John knew.

The table was covered with Government reports, for when the message came John was busy studying a financial point of importance to him. The telegram had lain on the table for half-an-hour, and John still stood before the fire-place, staring at the clock.

The senator had not been expected to live, in fact it was remarkable that he should have lived so long. But when a man has been preparing for a struggle during many months, he is apt to feel that the actual moment of the

battle is indefinitely far off. But now the senator was dead, and John meant to stand in his place. The battle was begun.

No one who has not seen some of the inside workings of political life can have any idea of what a man feels who is about to stand as a candidate in an election for the first time in his life. For months, perhaps for years, he has been engaged with political matters; his opinions have been formed by himself or by others into a very definite shape; it may be that, like Harrington, he has frequently spoken to large audiences with more or less success; he may have written pamphlets and volumes upon questions of the day, and his writings may have roused the fiercest criticism and the most loyal support. All this he may have done, and done it well, but when the actual moment arrives for him to stand upon his feet and address his constituents, no longer for the purpose of making them believe in his opinions, but in order to make them believe in himself, he is more than mortal if he does not feel something very unpleasantly resembling fear.

It is one thing to express a truth, it is another to set oneself upon a pedestal and declare that one represents it, and is in one's own person the living truth itself. John was too honest and true a man not to feel a positive reluctance to singing his own praises, and yet that is what most electioneering consists in.

But to be elected a senator in Massachusetts is a complicated affair. A man who intends to succeed in such an enterprise must not let the grass grow under his feet. In a few hours the whole machinery of election must be at work, and before night he would have to receive all sorts and conditions of men and electioneering agents. The morning papers did not contain any notice of the senator's death, as they had already gone to press when the news reached them, if indeed it was as yet public property. But other papers appeared at mid-day, and by that time the circumstance would undoubtedly be known. John struck a match and relit his cigar. The moment of hesitation was over, the last breathing-space before the fight, and all his activity returned. Half-an-hour later

he went out with a number of written telegrams in his hand, and proceeded to the central telegraph office.

The case was urgent. In the first place the governor of the state would, according to law and custom, immediately appoint a senator *pro tempore* to act until the legislature should elect the new senator in place of the one deceased. Secondly, the legislature, which meets once a year, was already in session, and the election would therefore take place immediately, unless some unusual delay were created, and this was improbable.

In spite of the article which had so outraged Josephine Thorn's sense of justice, there were many who believed in John Harrington as the prophet of the new faith, as the senator of reform and the orator of the future, and his friends were numerous and powerful, both in the electing body and among the non-official mass of prominent persons who make up the aggregate of public opinion. It had long been known that John Harrington would be brought forward at the next vacancy, which, in the ordinary course of things, would have occurred

in about a year's time, at the expiration of the senior senator's term of office, but which had now been suddenly caused by the death of his colleague. John was therefore aware that his success must depend almost immediately upon the present existing opinion of him that prevailed, and as he made his way through the crowded streets to the telegraph office, he realised that no effort of his own would be likely to make a change in that opinion at such short notice. At first it had seemed to him as though he were on a sudden brought face to face with a body of men whom he must persuade to elect him as their representative, and in spite of his great familiarity with political proceedings, the idea was extremely disagreeable to him. But on more mature reflection it was clear to him that he was in the hands of his friends, that he had said his say and had done all he would now be able to do in the way of public speaking or public writing, and that his only possible sphere of present action lay in exerting such personal influence as he possessed.

John Harrington was ambitious, or, to speak more accurately, he was wholly ruled by a

dominant aspiration. He was convinced by his own study and observation, as well as by a considerable amount of personal experience, that great reforms were becoming necessary in the government of the country, and he was equally sure that a man was needed who should be willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of creating a party to inaugurate such changes. In his opinion the surest step towards obtaining influence in the affairs of the country was a seat in the senate, and with an unhesitating belief in the truth and honesty of the principles he desired to make known, he devoted every energy he possessed to the attainment of his object.

To him government seemed the most important function of society, the largest, the broadest, and the noblest; to help, if possible, to be a leader in the establishment of what was good for the country, and to be the very foremost in destroying that which was bad, were in his view the best objects and aims for a strong man to follow. And John Harrington knew himself to be strong, and believed himself to be right, and thus armed he was prepared for any struggle.

The quality of vanity exists in all men, not least in those whose chief profession is modesty ; and seeing that it is a universal element, created and inherent in every one, it is impossible to say it is bad in itself. For it is impossible to conceive any human creature without it. A recent philosopher of reputation has taught that by vanity, by the desire to appear attractive to the other sex, man has changed his own person from the form of a beast to the image of God. Vanity is a mighty power and incentive, as great as hunger and thirst, and much more generally active in the affairs of civilized humanity. And yet its very name means hollowness. "The hollowness of hollowness, all things are hollowness," said the preacher, and his translators have put the word vanity in his mouth, because it means the same thing. But in itself, being hollow it is neither bad nor good ; its badness or goodness lies in those things whereof a man makes choice to fill the void, the inexpressible and undefinable craving within his soul ; as also hunger is only bad when it is satisfied by bad things, or not satisfied at all, so that in the one case it leads to disease,

and in the other to the committing of crimes in the desire for satisfaction. Many a poor fellow was hung by the neck in old times for stealing a loaf to stop his hunger, and many a man of wit goes to the mad-house now-a-days because the void of his vanity is unfilled.

But vanity is called by yet another name when its disagreeable side is hidden, and when its emptiness has come to crave for great things. It is pride, then honourable pride, then ambition, and perhaps at the last it is called heroic sacrifice. Vanity is an unsatisfied desire, hollow in itself, but capable of holding both bad and good. It is not identical with self-complacency, nor yet with conceit.

Probably John Harrington had originally possessed as much of this mysterious quality as most men who are conscious of strength and talent. It had never manifested itself in small things, and its very extent had made many things seem small which were of the highest importance to other men. He had worked as a boy at all manner of studies, like other boys, but the idea of labouring in distasteful matters for the sake of being first among his com-



panions seemed utterly absurd to him. From the time he had begun to think for himself—and he was young when he reached that stage—he had formed a rooted determination to be first in his country, to be a great reformer or a great patriot, and he cared to study nothing that was not connected with this idea. When his name was first heard in public life, it was as the author of a pamphlet advocating certain sweeping measures of which no one else had ventured to dream as yet. He would have smiled now had he taken the trouble to read again some of those earlier productions of his. It had seemed so easy to move the world then, and it seemed so hard now. But nevertheless he meant to move it, and as each year brought him increased strength and wider experience, it brought with it also the conviction of ultimate success. He had long forgotten to hope for the sudden and immediate power to stir the world, for he had discovered that it was a labour of years, the work of a lifetime; but if he had ever had any doubts as to the result of that work, he had forgotten them also.

And now his strength, his aspirations, his

vanity, and his intellect were roused together to the highest activity of which they were capable, the hour having come for which he had longed through half his lifetime, and though it was but the first trial, in which he might fail, it had for him all the importance of the supreme crisis of his existence.

No wonder that his face was pale and his lips set as he walked back to his lodgings from the telegraph office. As he walked down the hill by the railings of the common he came upon Josephine Thorn, standing at the entrance of one of the boarded walks, as though hesitating whether to go in. He was close to her as he bowed, and something in her face made him stop.

"Good morning, Miss Thorn," he said. She nodded gravely and hesitated. He was about to go on, thinking she was in one of those moods which he called capricious. But she stopped him.

"Mr. Harrington, I want to speak to you," she said quickly, seeing that her opportunity was on the point of slipping away.

"Yes?" said John, smiling faintly.

"Mr. Harrington—did you read that article about you, the day after the skating party?"

"Yes," said John. "It was not complimentary, if I remember."

"It was vile," said Joe, the angry colour rising to her temples again. "It was abominable. It was written by Mr. Vancouver."

John started slightly.

"I think you must be mistaken," he said.

"No, I am not mistaken. There were things in it, word for word as he said them to me just after the speech. I am perfectly sure."

John looked very gravely at Joe, as though to be sure of her honesty. There was no mistaking the look in her eyes.

"Miss Thorn," John said, "Vancouver may have said those very things to some one else, who wrote them and printed them. But in any case, I am exceedingly obliged to you for the information—"

"You are not angry?" Joe began, already repenting.

"No—how could I be? It may be important. The junior senator for Massachusetts died this morning, and there may be an election

at any moment. I have not told any one else, but it will be known everywhere in an hour's time. Good-bye, and many thanks."

"You will be senator, of course?" said Joe, in great excitement.

"I cannot tell," John answered. "Are you going down the hill?"

"No—thanks—I am going home," said Joe. "Good-bye."

## CHAPTER X.

JOE had been mistaken in thinking that Ronald would be less well received than herself. There was, of course, the usual amount of gossip concerning him, but as he refrained from eccentricities of dress when asked to dinner, and did not bet that he would ride his horse into the smoking-room of the Somerset Club, the gossip soon lost ground against the list of his good qualities. Moreover, he was extremely good-looking, and his manner was modesty itself. He admired everything he saw, partly because it was new to him, and partly because there was a good deal to admire.

For a day or two after the final scene with Joe he had avoided seeing her. He had not been able to resist the temptation to go back on the same day, and he had spent some hours

in considering that human affairs are extremely mutable. But the scenes about him were too new, and very many of the faces he saw were too attractive, to allow of his brooding for long over his misfortune. His first impulse had been to go away again on the very evening of his arrival. He had gone to see Joe, arriving during luncheon, in the expectation of seeing her alone again. There would be a scene of solemn farewell, in which he would bid her be happy in her own way, in a tone of semi-paternal benevolence, after which he would give her his blessing, and bid farewell to the pomps and vanities of society. He would naturally retire gloomily from the gay world, and end his miserable existence in the approved Guy Livingstone fashion of life, between cavendish tobacco, deep drinking, and high play. Joe would then repent of the ruin she had caused, and that would be a great satisfaction. There was once a little boy in Boston whose hands were very cold as he went to school. But he blew on them savagely, saying, "I am glad of it! It serves my father right for not buying me any gloves." That was

Ronald's state of mind. He had led the most sober of lives, and the wildest dissipation he remembered was the Lord Mayor's supper to the Oxford and Cambridge crews, when he himself had been one of the winners. But surely, for a disappointed lover there could be no course so proper as a speedy death by dissipation — which would serve Joe right. Therefore, on his return to his hotel, he ordered whisky, in a sepulchral tone of voice. He tasted it, and thought it detestable.

On reflection, he would put off the commencement of his wild career until the evening after he had seen Joe again. The ravages of drink would not be perceptible so soon, after all. He changed his tie for one of a darker hue, ate sparingly of a beefsteak, and went back to bid Joe a last farewell.

Sybil Brandon and Miss Schenectady were elements in the solemn leave-taking which Ronald had not anticipated. Sybil, moreover, made a great effort, for she was anxious to help Joe as much as possible in her difficulties. She talked to Ronald with a vivacity that was unusual, and Joe herself was astonished at

the brilliance of her conversation. She had always thought Sybil very reserved, if not somewhat shy.

Perhaps Sybil pitied Ronald a little. He was very quiet in his manner, though after the first few minutes he found himself talking much as usual. True, he often looked at Joe, and then was silent; but then again he looked at Sybil, and his tongue was unloosed. He was grateful after a time, and he was also flattered. Besides, he could not help noticing that his new acquaintance was extremely beautiful. His conscience smote him as he realised that he was thinking of her appearance, and he immediately quieted the qualm by saying that it was but natural admiration for an artistic object. Ronald did not know much about artists and that sort of people, but the expression formed itself conveniently in his mind.

The consequence was that he accepted an invitation to drive with the two girls after luncheon, and when they left him at his hotel, a proceeding against which he vehemently protested on the score of propriety, he reluctantly



acknowledged to himself that he had enjoyed the afternoon very much.

"Come and see us after five o'clock," said Sybil. "I will present you to Mrs. Wyndham. Nine hundred and thirty-six, Beacon Street," she added, laughing.

"With great pleasure—thanks," said Ronald.

"Good-bye, Ronald dear," said Joe pleasantly.

"Good-bye," he answered in a doubtful tone of voice, as he raised his hat; and the two girls drove away.

Sybil was apparently in very good spirits.

"Do not be frightened, Joe dearest," she said. "We will manage it very well. He is not hurt in the least."

"Really, I do not believe he is—so very much, you know," Joe answered. But she was thoughtful, and did not speak again for some time.

It was on the morning after this that Joe read the article on John's speech, and met him by the Common. Ronald did not call during the day, and in the evening Joe went to her party as she had intended; but neither Sybil nor John Harrington were there. Sybil did

not go to parties, and John probably had too much to do. But at supper Joe chanced to be standing near Mrs. Sam Wyndham.

"Oh, I so much wanted to see you, Miss Thorn," said the latter. "I wanted to tell you how much we like your cousin, Mr. Surbiton. He came to-day, and I have asked him to dinner to-morrow."

"Yes?" said Joe, turning a shade paler. "I am so glad you like him. He is a very nice boy."

"He is perfectly lovely," said Mrs. Sam, enthusiastically. "And he is so natural, you would not know he was English at all."

"Really?" said Joe, raising her eyebrows a little, but laughing at the same time.

"Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Wyndham, "I always forget you are not one of us. Besides, you are, you see."

Mrs. Wyndham rarely said a tactless thing, but this evening she was in such good spirits that she said what came uppermost in her thoughts. Joe was not offended; she was only bored.

"Will you not come and dine too to-morrow

night?" asked Mrs. Wyndham, who was anxious to atone.

"Thanks, awfully," said Joe, "but I have to dine with the Aitchisons."

Pocock Vancouver, pale and exquisite as ever, came up to the two ladies.

"Can I get you anything, Mrs. Wyndham?" he inquired, after a double bow.

"No, thank you. Johnny Hannibal is taking care of me," answered Mrs. Sam, coldly.

"Miss Thorn, what can I get you?" he asked, turning to Joe.

"Nothing, thanks," said Joe, "Mr. Biggielow is getting me something." She did not look at Vancouver as she answered, and the angry colour began to rise to her temples. Vancouver, who was not used to repulses such as these, and was too old a soldier to give up a situation so easily, stood a moment playing with his coat tails. A sudden thought passed through Joe's mind. It struck her that, considering the situation of affairs, it would be unwise to break off her acquaintance with Vancouver at the present time. Her first honest impulse was to cut him and never to speak to him again.

But it was better to act with more deliberation. In the first place, there might be more to be learnt which might be of service to John; secondly, people would talk about it if she cut him, and would invent some story to the effect that he had proposed to marry her, or that she had proposed to marry him. It was contrary to her nature to pretend anything she did not feel, but it would nevertheless be a mistake to quarrel openly with Vancouver.

“On second thoughts—if you would get me a glass of water—” she said, speaking to him. He instantly disappeared; but even in the moment before he departed to execute her command he had time to express by his look a sense of injury forgiven, which did not escape Joe.

“What a hypocrite the man is!” she thought.

Vancouver on his part could form no conception of the cause of the coldness the two ladies had shown him. He could not know that Joe had discovered in him the writer of the article, still less could he have guessed that Joe had told John, and that John had told Mrs. Sam. He could only suppose that

the two had been talking of something, and were annoyed at being interrupted.

When he came back with the glass of water Mr. Biggielow had just brought Joe some salad. The usual struggle began between the two men. Mr. Bonamy Biggielow was a little poet.

"I ought to thank you, Miss Thorn, instead of you thanking me," said Vancouver, in a seductive voice, on one side of Joe.

"Is it not the most crowded supper you ever saw?" remarked Mr. Biggielow on the other side.

"Why?" said Joe, eating her salad and looking straight before her.

"I thought you were going to send me away. I was so glad when you condescended to make use of me," answered Vancouver.

Mr. Biggielow also answered Joe's interrogation.

"Well," he said, "I mean it is thronged with people. There is a decided 'sound of revelry by night.'"

"Youth and beauty? That sort of thing?" said Joe to Biggielow. Then turning to

Vancouver, she added, "Why should I send you away?"

"I hope there is no reason," he said gravely. "In fact, I am sure there is none, except that you would of course always do exactly as you pleased about that and everything else."

"Yes, indeed," Joe answered, and her lip curled a little proudly, "you are quite right about that. But then, you know, I did not send you away."

"Thanks, again," said Vancouver.

"Do let me get you something more, Miss Thorn," suggested Mr. Biggielow. "No? There is any amount of *pâtés*. You always like—"

"Of course you have heard about Harrington?" said Vancouver in a low voice close to Josephine's ear.

"No, really," she answered. "Will you take my plate? And the glass—thanks." Mr. Bonamy Biggielow was obliged to retire. "You mean about the senatorship?" asked Joe.

"Yes. The senator died this morning. Harrington will make a fight for it. He has many friends."

"Among whom you count yourself, doubtless," remarked Joe.

"Not politically, of course. I take no active part——"

"Yes, I know." Joe knew the remainder of the sentence by heart. "Then you will have a glorious opportunity for maintaining an armed neutrality."

"Oh, if it comes to that," said Vancouver mildly, "I would rather see Harrington senator than some of our own men. At all events, he is honest."

"At all events!" Joe repeated. "You think, perhaps, that some man of your own party may be elected who will not turn out to be honest?"

"Well, the thing is possible. You see, politics are such a dirty business—all kinds of men get in."

Joe laughed in a way that made Vancouver nervous. He was beginning to know her, and he could tell when some sharp thrust was coming by the way she laughed. Nevertheless, he was fascinated by her.

"It is not long since you told me that

Mr. Harrington's very mild remark about extinguishing bribery and corruption was a piece of gross exaggeration," said Joe. "Why do you say politics are dirty work?"

"There is a great difference," answered Vancouver.

"What difference? Between what?"

"Between saying that the business of politics is not clean, and saying that all public officers are liars, like the Cretans."

"Who is exaggerating now?" asked Joe scornfully.

"Of course it is I," answered Vancouver submissively. "If it is not a rude question, did not that dress come from Egypt?"

"Yes." The garment in question was made of a kind of soft white, fluted material over a rose-coloured silk ground. The raised flutings followed the exquisite lines of Joe's figure, and had the double merit of accentuating its symmetry, and of so leading the eye as to make her height seem greater than it really was. Cut square at the neck, it showed her dazzling throat at its best advantage, and a knot of pink lilies at the waist har-



monised delicately with the colour of the whole.

"It is just like you," said Vancouver, "to have something different from everybody else. I admire Eastern things so much, and one gets so tired of the everlasting round of French dresses."

"I am glad you like it," said Joe, indifferently.

"I am so anxious to meet your cousin, Miss Thorn," said Vancouver, trying a new subject. "I hear there is to be a dinner for him to-morrow night at Mrs. Sam Wyndham's. But of course I am not asked."

"Why 'of course'?" inquired Joe quickly.

"I believe Mrs. Wyndham thinks I dislike Englishmen," said Vancouver at random. "But she is really very much mistaken."

"Really?"

"Yes—I should be willing to like any number of Englishmen for the sake of being liked by one Englishwoman." He looked at Joe expressively as he spoke.

"Really?"

"Indeed, yes. Do you not believe me?"

"Oh, yes," said Joe. "Why should I not believe you?" Her voice was calm, but that same angry flush that had of late so often shown itself began to rise slowly at her temples. Vancouver saw it, and thought she was blushing at what he said.

"I trust you will," said Vancouver. "I trust that some day you will let me tell you who that Englishwoman is."

It was horrible; he was making love to her, this wretch whom she despised. She turned her head away to hide the angry look in her eyes.

"Thanks—no, if you do not mind," said she. "I do not care to receive confidences, I always forget to forget them." It was not in order that Pocock Vancouver might make love to her that she had sent away Bonamy Biggielow, the harmless little poet. She wished him back again, but he was embarked in a vast enterprise to dispute with Johnny Hannibal a place near Miss St. Joseph. Mrs. Wyndham had long since disappeared.

"Will you please take me back to my aunt?"

said Joe. As they passed from the supper-room they suddenly came upon John Harrington, who was wandering about in an unattached fashion, apparently looking for some one. He bowed and stared a little at seeing Joe on Vancouver's arm, but she gave him a look of such earnest entreaty that he turned and followed her at a distance to see what would happen. Seeing her sit down by her aunt, he came up and spoke to her, almost thrusting Vancouver aside with his broad shoulders. Vancouver, however, did not dispute the position, but turned on his heel and went away.

"Oh, I am so glad," said Joe, with a sigh of relief. "I thought I should never get away from him!"

It is amazing what a difference the common knowledge of a secret will make in the intimacy of two people.

"I was rather taken aback at seeing you with him," said John. "Not that it can make any difference to you," he added quickly, "only you seemed so angry at him this morning."

"But it does—" Joe began, impulsively. "That is, I began by meaning to cut him,

and then I thought it would be a mistake to make a scandal."

"Yes," said John, "it would be a great mistake. Besides, I would not for all the world have you take a part in this thing. It would do no good, and it might do harm."

"I think I have taken a part already," said Joe, somewhat hurt.

"Yes, I know. I am very grateful, but I hope you will not think any more about it, nor allow it to influence you in any way."

"But what is the use of friends if they do not take a part in one's quarrels?" asked Joe.

John looked at her earnestly for a few seconds, and saw that she was perfectly sincere. He had grown to like Josephine of late, and he was grateful to her for her friendship. Her manner that morning, when she told him of her discovery, had made a deep impression on him.

"My dear Miss Thorn," he said earnestly, in a low voice, "you are too good and kind, and I thank you very heartily for your friendship. But I think you were very wise not to cut Vancourver, and I hope you will

not quarrel with anybody for any matter so trivial." The colour came to Joe's face, but not for anger this time.

"Trivial!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, trivial," John repeated. "Remember that it is the policy of that paper to abuse me, and that if Vancouver had not written the article, the editor could have found some one else easily enough who would have done it."

"But it is such a dastardly thing," said Joe. "He always says to every one that he has the greatest respect for you, and then he does a thing like this. If I were you I would kill him—I am sure I would."

"That would not be the way to win an election now-a-days," said John, laughing.

"Oh, I would not care about that," said Joe, hotly. "But I dare say it is very silly of me," she added. "You do not seem to mind it at all."

"It is not worth while to lose one's temper or one's soul for the iniquities of Mr. Pocock Vancouver," said John. "The man may do me harm, but as I never expected his friendship or help, he neither falls nor rises in my

estimation on that account. Blessed are they who expect nothing!"

"Blessed indeed," said Joe. "But one cannot help expecting men who have the reputation of being gentlemen to behave decently."

"Vancouver has a right to his political opinions, and a perfect right to express them in any way he sees fit," said John.

"Oh, of course," said Joe, impatiently. "This is a free country, and that sort of thing. But if he means to express political opinions he should not cry aloud at every tea-party in town that he is neutral and takes no active part in politics. I think that writing violent articles in a newspaper is a very active part indeed. And he should not go about saying that he has the highest reverence for a man, and then call him a lunatic and a charlatan in print, unless he is willing to sign his name to it, and take the consequences. Should he? I think it is vile, and horrid, and abominable, and nasty, and I hate him."

"With the exception of the peroration to that speech," said John, who was very much

amused, "I am afraid I must agree with you. A man certainly ought not to do any of those things."

"Then why do you defend him?" asked Joe, with flashing eyes.

"Because, on general principles, I do not think a man is so much worse than his fellows because he does things they would very likely do in his place. There are things done every day, all over the world, quite as bad as that, and no one takes much notice of them. Almost every business man is trying to get the better of some other business man by fair means or foul."

"You do not seem to have a very exalted idea of humanity," said Joe.

"A large part of humanity is sick," said John, "and it is as well to be prepared for the worst in any illness."

"I wish you were not so tremendously calm, you know," said Joe, looking thoughtfully into John's face. "I am afraid it will injure you."

"Why in the world should it injure me?" asked John, much astonished at the remark.

"I have a presentiment—" she checked herself suddenly. "I do not like to tell you," she added.

"I would like to hear what you think, if you will tell me," said John, gravely.

"Well, do not be angry. I have a presentiment that you will not be made senator. Are you angry?"

"No indeed. But why?"

"Just for that very reason; you are too calm. You are not enough of a partisan. Every one is a partisan here."

John was silent, and his face was grave and thoughtful. The remark was profound in its way, and showed a far deeper insight into political matters than he imagined Joe possessed. He had long regarded Mrs. Wyndham as a woman of fine sense and judgment, and had often asked her opinion on important questions. But in all his experience she had never said anything that seemed to strike so deeply at the root of things as this simple remark of Josephine's.

"I am afraid you are angry," said Joe, seeing that he was grave and silent.



"You have set me thinking, Miss Thorn," he answered.

"You think I may be right?" she said.

"The idea is quite new to me. I think it is perhaps the best definition of the fact that I ever heard. But it is not what ought to be."

"Of course not," Joe answered. "Nothing is just what it ought to be. But one has to take things as they are."

"And make them what they should be," added John, and the look of strong determination came into his face.

"Ah, yes," said Joe, softly. "Make things what they should be. That is the best thing a man can live for."

"Perhaps we might go home, Joe," said Miss Schenectady, who had been conversing for a couple of hours with another old lady of literary tastes.

"Yes, Aunt Zoë," said Joe, rousing herself, "I think we might."

"Shall I see you to-morrow night at Mrs. Wyndham's dinner?" asked John, as they parted.

"No, I refused. Good-night."

As Joe sat by her aunt's side in the deep dark carriage on the way home, her hands were cold and she trembled from head to foot. And when at last she laid her head upon her pillow there were tears in her eyes and on her cheeks.

"Is it possible that I can be so heartless?" she murmured to herself.

## CHAPTER XI.

RONALD went to see Sybil Brandon at five o'clock, and as it chanced he found her alone. Mrs. Wyndham, she said, had gone out, or rather she had not yet come home; but if Ronald would wait, she would certainly be in.

Ronald waited, and talked to Miss Brandon in the mean while. He had a bereaved air when he arrived, which was calculated to excite sympathy, and his conversation was subdued in tone, and grave in subject. But Sybil did her best to cheer him, and in the fulness of her sympathy did perhaps more than was absolutely necessary. Ronald's wound was not deep, but he had a firm conviction that it ought to be.

Any man would have thought the same in his place. Certainly, few people would have

understood what they felt in such a position. He had grown up believing he was to marry a young and charming woman of whom he was really exceedingly fond, and now he was suddenly told that the whole thing was a mistake. It was enough to break a man's heart, and yet Ronald's heart was not broken, and to his great surprise beat nearly as regularly the day after his disaster as it had done during the whole two-and-twenty years of his life. He could not understand his own calmness, and he was sure that he ought to be profoundly grieved over the whole affair, so that his face was drawn into an expression of solemnity somewhat out of keeping with its singular youthful freshness of colour and outline.

The idea of devoting himself to the infernal gods as a sacrifice to his blighted passion had passed away in the course of the drive on the previous afternoon. He had felt no inclination to drown his cares in drink during the evening, but on the contrary he had gone for a brisk walk in Beacon Street, and had ascertained by actual observation, and the assistance of a box of matches, the precise position of No. 936.

This had occupied some time, as it is a peculiarity of Boston to put the number of the houses on the back instead of the front, so that the only certain course to follow in searching for a friend, is to reach the rear of his house by a circuitous route through side streets and back alleys, and then, having fixed the exact position of his residence by astronomical observation, to return to the front and inquire for him. It is true that even then one is frequently mistaken, but there is nothing else to be done.

It was perhaps not extraordinary that Ronald should be at some pains to find out where Mrs. Wyndham lived, for Sybil was the only person besides Joe and Miss Schenectady whom he had yet met, and he wanted company, for he hated and dreaded solitude with his whole heart. Having travelled all the night previous, he went home and slept a sounder sleep than falls to the lot of most jilted lovers.

The next day he rose early and "did" Boston. It did not take him long, and he said to himself that half of it was very jolly, and half of it was too utterly beastly for anything. The Common, and the Gardens, and Commonwealth

Avenue, you know, were rather pretty, and must have cost a deuce of a lot of money in this country; but as for the State House, and Paul Revere's Church, and the Old South, and the city generally, why it was simply disgusting, all that, you know. And in the afternoon he went to see Sybil Brandon, and began talking about what he had seen.

She was, if anything, more beautiful than ever, and as she looked at him, and held out her hand with a friendly greeting, Ronald felt himself actually blushing, and Sybil saw it and blushed too, a very little. Then they sat down by the window where there were plants, and they looked out at the snow and the people passing. Sybil asked Ronald what he had been doing.

"I have been doing Boston," he said. "Of course it was the proper thing. But I am afraid I do not know much about it."

"But do you like it?" she asked. "It is much more important, I think, to know whether you like things or dislike them, than to know everything about them. Do not you think so?"

"Oh, of course," said Ronald. "But I like Boston very much; I mean the part where you

live. All this you know—Commonwealth Place, and the Public Park, you know, and Beacon Avenue, of course, very much. But the city—”

“You do not like the city?” suggested Sybil, seeing he hesitated, and smiling at his strange confusion of names.

“No,” said Ronald. “I think it is so cramped and ugly, and all little narrow streets. But then, of course, it is such a little place. You get into the country the moment you walk anywhere.”

“It seems very big to the Bostonians,” said Sybil, laughing.

“Oh, of course. You have lived here all your life, and so it is quite different.”

“I? Dear me no! I am not a Bostonian at all.”

“Oh,” said Ronald, “I thought you were. That was the reason I was not sure of abusing the city to you. But it is not a bad place, I should think, when you know lots of people, and that was such a pretty drive we went yesterday.”

“Yes, it must seem very new to you. Every-

thing must, I should think, most of all this casual way we have of receiving people. But there really is a Mrs. Wyndham, with whom I am staying, and she will be in before long."

"Oh—don't—don't mention her," said Ronald, hastily, "I mean it—it is of no importance whatever, you know." He blushed violently.

Sybil laughed, and Ronald blushed again, but in all his embarrassment he could not help thinking what a silvery ring there was in her voice.

"I am afraid Mrs. Wyndham would not like it, if she heard you telling me she was not to be mentioned, and was not of any importance whatever. But she is a very charming woman, and I am very fond of her."

"She is your aunt, I presume, Miss Brandon?" said Ronald.

"My aunt?" repeated Sybil. "Oh no, not at all—only a friend."

"Oh, I thought all unattached young ladies lived with aunts here, like Miss Schenectady." Ronald smiled grimly at the recollections of the previous day.

"Not quite that," said Sybil, laughing.



"Mrs. Wyndham is not the least like Miss Schenectady. She is less clever and more human."

"Really, I am so glad," said Ronald. "And she talks so oddly—Joe's—Miss Thorn's aunt. Could you tell me, if it is not a rude question, why so many people here are never certain of anything? It strikes me as so absurdly ridiculous, you know. She said yesterday that 'perhaps, if I rang the bell, she could send a message.' And the man at the hotel this morning had no postage stamps, and said that perhaps if I went to the General Post Office I might be able to get some there."

"Yes," said Sybil, "it is absurd, and one catches it so easily."

"But would it not be ridiculous if the guard called out at a station, 'Perhaps this is Boston!' or, 'Perhaps this is New York!?' It would be too utterly funny."

"I am afraid that if you begin to make a list of our peculiarities you will find funnier things than that," said Sybil, laughing. "But then we always laugh at you in England, so that it is quite fair."

“Oh, we are very absurd, I know,” said Ronald; “but I think we are much more comfortable. For instance, we do not have niggers about who call us ‘Mister.’”

“You must not use such words in Boston, Mr. Surbiton,” said Sybil. “Seriously, there are people who would be very much offended. You must speak of ‘waiters of colour,’ or ‘the coloured help;’ you must be very careful.”

“I will,” said Ronald. “Thanks. Is everything rechristened in that way? I am afraid I shall always be in hot water.”

“Oh yes, there are no men and women here. They are all ladies and gentlemen, or ‘the gurls,’ and ‘the felloows.’ But it is very soon learnt.”

“Yes, I can imagine,” said Ronald, very much amused. “But—by the bye, this is the season here, is not it?”

So they chattered together for nearly an hour about the merest nothings, not saying anything particularly witty, but never seeming to each other in the least dull. Ronald had gone to Sybil for consolation, and he was so well consoled that he was annoyed when Mrs.

Wyndham came in and interrupted his *tête-à-tête*. Sybil introduced Ronald, and when he rose to go, after a quarter of an hour, Mrs. Wyndham asked him to dinner on the following day.

That night when Ronald was alone in his room at the hotel, he took Josephine's photograph from a case in his bag and set it before him on the table. He would think about her for a while, and reflect on his situation; and he sat down for that purpose, his chin resting on his folded hands. Dear Joe—he loved her so dearly and she was so cruel not to marry him! But, somehow, as he looked, he seemed to see through the photograph, and another face came and smiled on him. Again and again he called his attention back, and tried to realise that the future would be very blank and dreary without Joe; but do what he would, it did not seem so blank and dreary after all; there was somebody else there.

“Joe is quite right,” he said aloud. “I am a brute.” And he went to bed, trying hard to be disgusted with himself. But his dreams were sweet, for he dreamed he was sitting

among the ferns at Mrs. Wyndham's house, talking to Sybil Brandon.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Wyndham, when Ronald was gone, "he is perfectly charming. We have positively found a new man."

"Yes," said Sybil, "I am so glad you asked him to dinner. I do not think he is very clever; but he talks easily, and says funny things."

"I suppose he has come over to marry his cousin—has not he?" inquired Mrs. Wyndham.

"No," replied Sybil, "he is not going to marry Joe Thorn," she answered absently; for she was thinking of something, and her tone indicated such absolute certainty in the matter that Mrs. Wyndham looked quickly at her.

"Well, you seem quite certain about it, any way," she said.

"I? Oh—well, yes. I think it is extremely unlikely that he will marry her."

"I almost wish I had offered to take him to the party to-night," said Mrs. Wyndham, evidently unsatisfied. "However, as he is coming to-morrow that will do quite as well. Sybil, dear, you look tired. Why don't you go and lie down before dinner?"

"Oh, because—I am not tired, really. I am always pale, you know."

"Well, I am tired to death myself, my dear, and as there is no one here I will say I am not at home, and rest till dinner."

Mrs. Wyndham had been as much startled as any one by news of the senator's death that morning, and though she always professed to agree with her husband, she was delighted at the prospect of John Harrington's election. She had been a good friend to him, and he to her, for years, and she cared much more for his success than for the turn of events. She had met him in the street that afternoon, and they had perambulated the pavement of Beacon Street for more than an hour in the discussion of the future. John had also told her that he was now certain that Vancouver was the writer of the offensive articles that had so long puzzled him; at all events that the especial one which had appeared the morning after the skating-party, was undoubtedly from his pen. Mrs. Wyndham, who had long suspected as much, was very angry when she found that her suspicions had been so just, and she

proposed to deal summarily with Vancouver. John, however, begged her to temporise, and she promised to be prudent.

“By the way,” she said to Sybil, as she was about to leave the room, “it was a special providence that you did not marry Vancouver. He has turned out badly.”

Sybil started slightly and looked up. Her experience with Pocock Vancouver was a thing she rarely referred to. She had undoubtedly given him great encouragement, and had then mercilessly refused him, to the great surprise of every one. But as that had occurred a year and a half ago, it was quite natural that she should treat him like any one else now, just as though nothing had happened. She looked up at Mrs. Wyndham in some surprise.

“What has he done?” she asked.

“You know how he always talks about John Harrington?”

“He always says he respects him immensely.”

“Very well. It is he who has been writing those scurrilous articles that we have talked about so much.”

"How disgraceful!" exclaimed Sybil. "How perfectly detestable! Are you quite sure?"

"There is not the least doubt about it. John Harrington told me himself."

"Oh, then of course it is true," said Sybil. "How dreadful!"

"Harrington takes it in the calmest way, as though he had expected it all his life. He says they were never friends, and that Vancouver has a perfect right to his political opinions. I never saw anybody so cool in my life."

"What a splendid fellow he is!" exclaimed Sybil. "There is something lion-like about him. He would forgive an enemy a thousand times a day, and say the man who injured him had a perfect right to his opinions."

"Why gracious goodness, Sybil, how you talk!" cried Mrs. Wyndham; "you are not in love with the man yourself, are you, my dear?"

"I?" asked Sybil. Then she laughed. "No, indeed! I would not marry him if he asked me."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I would never marry a celebrity like that. He is splendid, and noble, and honest; but everything in him is devoted to his career. There is no room for a woman at all."

"I think the amount of solid knowledge about men that you dear, sweet, lovely, beautiful, innocent little girls possess, is something just too perfectly amazing!" said Mrs. Wyndham, slowly, and with great emphasis.

"If we do," said Sybil, "it is not surprising. I am sure I do not wonder at girls knowing a great deal about the world. Everything is discussed before them, and marriage and men are the usual topics of conversation. The wonder is that girls still make so many mistakes in their choice, after listening to the combined experience of all the married women of their acquaintance for several years. It shows that no one is infallible."

"What a funny girl you are, Sybil!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham. "I think you turn the tables on me altogether."

"Yes? Well, I have experiences of my own now," said Sybil, leaning back against an enormous cushion.



Mrs. Wyndham came and sat upon the arm of the easy-chair, and put one arm round Sybil's neck and kissed her.

"Sybil, dear," she said affectionately, and then stopped. They sat in silence for some time looking at the great logs burning in the deep fire-place.

"Sybil, dear," Mrs. Wyndham began again, presently, "why did you refuse Vancouver? You do not mind telling me, do you?"

"Why do you ask?" said Sybil. "It makes no difference now."

"No, perhaps not. Only I always thought it strange. He must have done something you did not like, of course."

"Yes, that was it. He did something I did not like. Mr. Harrington would have said he had a perfect right to do as he pleased. But I could not marry him after that."

"Was it anything so very bad?" asked Mrs. Wyndham, affectionately, smoothing Sybil's thick fair hair.

"It was not as deep as a well, nor as broad as a house," said Sybil, with a faint, scornful laugh; "but it was enough. It would do."

"I wish you would tell me, dear," persisted

Mrs. Wyndham. "I have a particular reason for wanting to know."

"Well, I would not have told before this other affair came out," said Sybil. "I would not marry him because he tried to find out from poor mamma's man of business whether we were rich. And the day after he got the information that I was rich enough to suit him, he proposed. But mamma knew all about what had gone on and told me, and so I refused him. She said I was wrong, and would not have told me if she had known it would make any difference. And now you say I was right. I am sure I was; it was only a fancy I had for him, because he was so clever and well-bred. Besides, he is much too old."

"He is old enough to be your father, my dear," said Mrs. Wyndham; "but I think you were a little hard on him. Almost any man would do the same. We here in Boston, of course, always know about each other. It was a little mean of him, no doubt, but it was not a mortal crime."

"I think it was low," said Sybil, decisively. "To think of a man as rich as that caring for a paltry twenty or thirty thousand a-year."

"I know, my dear," said Mrs. Wyndham, "it is mean; but they all do it, and life is uncertain, and so is business I suppose, and twenty or thirty thousand a-year does make a difference to most people, I expect."

Mrs. Wyndham looked at the fire reflectively, as though not absolutely certain of the truth of the proposition. Sam Wyndham was commonly reputed to be worth a dozen millions or so. He would have been very well off even in New York, and in Boston he was rich.

"It would make a great difference to me," said Sybil, laughing, "for it is all I have in the world. But I am glad I refused Vancouver on that ground, all the same. If it had not been for that I should have married him—just imagine!"

"Yes, just imagine!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham. "And to have had him turn out such an abominable blackguard!"

"There is no mistaking what you think of him now, at all events," said Sybil.

"No, my dear. And now we have talked so long that it is time to dress for dinner."

How Mrs. Wyndham went to the party and met Joe Thorn has already been told. It was

no wonder that Mrs. Sam treated Vancouver so coldly, and she repulsed him again more than once during the evening. When Joe was gone, John Harrington went up to her.

"I came very late," he said, "and at first I could not find you, and then I had to say something to Miss Thorn. But I wanted to see you especially."

"Give me your arm," said Mrs. Wyndham, "and we will go into the conservatory. I have something especial to say to you, too." Once out of the thick of the party, they sat down. "I have discovered something more about our amiable friend," she continued. "It is a sidelight on his character—something he did a year and a half ago. Do you remember his flirtation with Sybil Brandon at Saratoga and then at Newport?"

"Yes, I was in Newport most of the summer."

"You don't know why she refused him, though. It's perfectly rich!" Mrs. Sam laughed drily.

"No; I only know she did, and every one seemed very much astonished," answered John.

"She refused him because he had been trying to find out how much she was worth. It speaks volumes for the characters of both of them, does it not?"

"Yes, indeed," said John. "What a Jew that man is! He is as rich as Croesus."

"Oh, well, as I told her, most men would do it."

"I suppose so," John answered, laughing a little. "A man the other night told me he was going to make inquiries concerning the fortunes of his beloved one. He said he had no idea of buying a pig in a poke. That was graceful, was it not?" Mrs. Wyndham laughed aloud.

"He was honest, at all events. By the bye, do you know you have a fanatic admirer in Sybil Brandon?"

"No, really? I like her very much, too; and I am very glad if she likes me."

"She said she would not marry you if you asked her, though," said Mrs. Sam, laughing again. "You see you must not flatter yourself too much."

"I do not. I should not think of asking

her to marry me. Did she give any especial reason why she would inevitably refuse me ?”

“Yes, indeed ; she said you were lion-like, and, oh, the most delightful things ! But she said she would not marry you if you asked her, because you are a celebrity and devoted to your career, so that there is no room for a woman in your life. Is that true ?”

“I am not so sure,” said John, thoughtfully. “Perhaps she is right in the way she means. I never thought much about it.”

## CHAPTER XII.

THE idea Joe had formed about Vancouver was just, in the main, and she was not far wrong in disliking him and thinking him dangerous. Nevertheless John Harrington understood the man better. Vancouver was so constituted that his fine intellect and quick perception were unsupported by any strong principle of individuality. He was not capable of hatred—he could only be spiteful; he could not love, he could only give a woman what he could spare of himself. He would at all times rather avoid an open encounter, but he rarely neglected an opportunity of dealing a thrust at any one he disliked, when he could do so safely. He was the very opposite of John, who never said of any one what he would not say to themselves, and granted to every man the broadest

right of judgment and freedom of opinion. Nevertheless there was not enough real strength in anything Vancouver felt to make him very dangerous as an opponent, nor valuable as a friend. Had it not been for the important position he had attained by his clever subtlety in affairs, and by the assistance of great railroad magnates who found in him a character and intelligence precisely suited to their ends, Pocock Vancouver would have been a neutral figure in the world, lacking both the enterprise to create an idea and the courage to follow it out. It was most characteristic of his inherent smallness, that in spite of his wealth and the very large operations that must be constantly occupying his thoughts, he could demean himself to write anonymous articles in a daily paper, in the hope of injuring a man he disliked.

It is true that his feeling against Harrington was as strong as anything in his nature. He detested John's strength because he had once made him a confidante and John had done him a favour. He disliked him also because he knew that wherever they chanced to be together, John received an amount of consideration and



even of respect which he himself could not obtain with all his money and all his cleverness. His mind, too, delighted in detail and revolted against John's sweeping generalities. For these several reasons Vancouver had taken great delight in writing and printing sundry vicious criticisms upon John in the absolute certainty of not being found out. The editor of the paper did not know Vancouver's name, for the articles came through the post with a modest request that they might be inserted if they were of any use; and they were generally so pungent and to the point that the editor was glad to get such material, especially as no remuneration was demanded.

As for the confidence Vancouver had once made to John, it was another instance of his littleness. At the time when Vancouver was anxious to marry Sybil Brandon, John Harrington was very intimate at the house, and was, in Vancouver's opinion, a dangerous rival; at all events he felt that the contest was not an agreeable one, nor altogether to his own advantage. Accordingly he tried every means to clear the coast, as he expressed it; but

although John probably had no intention of marrying Sybil, and Sybil certainly had never thought of marrying John, the latter was fond of her society, and of her mother's, and came to the cottage on the Newport cliff with a regularity that drove Vancouver to the verge of despair. Pocock at last could bear it no longer and asked John to dinner. Over a bottle of Pommery Sec he confided his passion, and hinted that John was the obstacle to his wooing. Harrington raised his eyebrows, smiled, wished Vancouver all success, and left Newport the next day. If Vancouver had not disgusted Sybil by his inquiries concerning her fortune, he would have married her, and his feelings towards John would have been different. But to know that Harrington had done him the favour of going away, knowing that he was about to offer himself to Miss Brandon, and then to have failed in his suit, was more than the vanity of Mr. Pocock Vancouver could bear with any sort of calmness, and the consequence was, that he disliked John as much as he disliked anybody or anything in the world. There is no resentment like the resentment of

wounded vanity, nor any self-reproach like that of a man who has shown his weakness.

When Mrs. Wyndham told John the story of Vancouver's failure he could have told her the rest, had he chosen, and she would certainly have been very much amused. But John was not a man to betray a confidence, even that of a man who had injured him, and so he merely laughed and kept his own counsel. He would have scorned to speak to Vancouver about the articles, or to make any change in his manner towards him. As he had said to Josephine, he had expected nothing from the man, and now he was not disappointed.

Meanwhile Vancouver, who was weakly but frequently susceptible to the charms of woman, had made up his mind that if Josephine had enough pin-money she would make him an admirable wife, and he accordingly began to make love to her in his own fashion, as has been seen. A day or two earlier Joe would have laughed at him, and it would perhaps have amused her to hear what he had to say, as it amuses most young women to listen to pretty speeches. But Joe was between two

fires, so to speak ; she was under the two influences that were strongest with her. She loved John Harrington with all her heart, and she hated Vancouver with all her strength. It is true that her hatred was the only acknowledged passion, for her maidenly nature was not able yet to comprehend her love ; and the mere thought that she cared for a man who did not care for her brought the hot blush to her cheek. But the love was in her heart all the same, strong and enduring, so that Vancouver found the fortress doubly guarded.

He could not entirely explain to himself her conduct at the party. She had always seemed rather willing to accept his attentions and to listen to his conversation, but on this particular evening, just when he wished to make a most favourable impression, she had treated him with surprising coldness. There was a supreme superiority in the way she had at first declined his services, and had then told him he might be permitted to get her a glass of water. The subsequent satisfaction of having ousted Mr. Bonamy Biggielow, the little poet, from his position at her side was small enough, and was

more than counterbalanced and destroyed by her returning to her chaperon at the first soft-tongued insinuation of a desire to flirt, which Vancouver ventured to speak. Moreover, when Harrington almost pushed him aside and sat down by Josephine, Vancouver could bear it no longer, but turned on his heel and went away, with black thoughts in his heart. It seemed as though John was to be always in his way.

It would be hard to say what he would have felt had he known that Josephine Thorn, John Harrington, and Mrs. Sam Wyndham all knew of his journalistic doings. And yet it was nearly certain that no one of the three would ever speak to him on the subject. Joe would not, because she knew John would not like it; John himself despised the whole business too much to condescend to reproach Vancouver; and, finally, Mrs. Wyndham was too much a woman of the world to be willing to cause a scandal when it could possibly be avoided. She liked Vancouver too, and regretted what he had done. Her liking only extended to his conversation and agreeable manners, for she was beginning to despise his character; but he had so

long been an *habitué* about the house that she could not make up her mind to turn him out. But for all that she could not help being cold to him at first.

John himself was too busy with important matters to bestow much thought on Vancouver or his doings. His day had been spent in interviews and letter-writing; fifty people had been to see him at his rooms, and he had despatched more than that number of letters. At five o'clock he had slipped out with the intention of dining at his club before any one else was there, but he had met Mrs. Wyndham in the street, and had spent his dinner-hour with her. At half-past six he had another appointment in his rooms, and it was not till nearly eleven that he was able to get away and look in upon the party, when he met Joe. For a week this kind of life would probably last and then all would be over, in one way or another, but meanwhile the excitement was intense.

On the next day Ronald came to see Joe before ten o'clock. The time hung heavily on his hands, and he found it impossible to occupy himself with his troubles. There were moments when the first impression of disappointment

returned upon him very strongly, but he was conscious of a curious duplicity about his feelings, and he knew well enough in his inmost heart that he was only evoking a fictitious regret out of respect for what he thought he ought to feel.

“Tell me all about the people here, Joe,” said he, sitting down beside her almost as though nothing had happened. “Who is Mrs. Wyndham, to begin with?”

“Mrs. Wyndham—she is Sam Wyndham’s wife. Just that,” said Joe.

“And Sam Wyndham?”

“Oh—he is one of the prevalent profession. He is a millionaire. In fact he is one of the real ones.”

“When do they get to be real?” asked Ronald.

“Oh, when they have more than ten millions. The other ones do not count much. It is much more the thing to be poor, unless you have ten millions.”

“That is something in my favour, at all events,” said Ronald.

“Very much. You have been to see Mrs. Wyndham, then?”

"Oh yes, I went yesterday, and she has asked me to dinner to-night. It is awfully good of her, I must say."

"You will like her very much, and Sybil Brandon too," said Joe. "Sybil is an adorable creature."

"She is most decidedly good-looking, certainly. There is no doubt about it." Ronald pulled his delicate moustache a little. "Though she is quite different style from you, Joe," he added presently, as though he had discovered a curious fact in natural history.

"Of course. Sybil is a great beauty, and I am only pretty," answered Joe in perfectly good faith.

"I think you are a great beauty too," said Ronald critically. "I am sure most people think so, and I have heard lots of men say so. Besides, you are much more striking-looking than she is."

"Oh, nonsense, Ronald!"

"Joe—who is Mr. Vancouver?"

"Vancouver! Why do you ask especially?"

"It is very natural, I am sure," said Ronald in a somewhat injured tone. "You wrote about him. He was the only person you



mentioned in your letter—that is, he and a man called Harrington.”

“Mr. Vancouver—Mr. Pocock Vancouver—is a middle-aged man of various accomplishments,” said Joe, “more especially distinguished by the fact that Sybil Brandon refused to marry him some time ago. He is an enemy of Mr. Harrington’s, and they are both friends of Mrs. Wyndham’s.”

“Ah!” ejaculated Ronald, “and who is Harrington?”

“Mr. John Harrington is a very clever person who has to do with politics,” said Joe, without hesitation, but as she continued she blushed a little. “He is always being talked about because he wants to reform everything. He is a great friend of ours.”

“Oh—I thought so,” said Ronald. “What sort of a fellow is he?”

“I suppose he is five-and-thirty years old; he is neither tall nor short, and he has red hair,” said Joe.

“What a beauty!” laughed Ronald.

“He is not at all ugly, you know,” said Joe, still blushing.

“Shall I ever see him?”

"You will see him to-night at Mrs. Wyndham's; he told me he was going."

"Oh—are you going too, Joe?"

"No. I have another dinner-party. You will have to do without me."

"I suppose I shall always have to do without you, now," said Ronald disconsolately.

"Don't be silly, Ronald!"

"Silly!" repeated Surbiton in injured tones. "You call it silly to be cut up when one is treated as you have treated me! It is too bad, Joe!"

"You are a dear, silly old thing," said his cousin affectionately, "and I will say it as much as I please. It is ever so much better, because we can always be like brother and sister now, and we shall not marry and quarrel over everything till we hate each other."

"I think you are very heartless, all the same," said Ronald.

"Listen to me, Ronald—"

"You will go and marry one of these middle-aged people with red hair—"

"Be quiet," said Joe, stamping her little foot. "Listen to me. I will not marry you because I like you and I do not love you,

and I never mean to marry any middle-aged person. I shall not marry at all, most probably. Will you please to imagine what life would have been like if we had married first, and found out afterwards that we had made a mistake."

"Of course that would have been awful," said Ronald. "But then it would not be a mistake, because I love you—like anything, Joe!"

"Oh, nonsense! You are quite mistaken, my dear boy, because some day you will fall desperately in love with some one else, and you will like me just as much as ever—"

"Of course I should," said Ronald indignantly. "Nothing would ever make any difference at all!"

"But, Ronald," retorted Joe, laughing, "if you were desperately in love with some one else, how could you still be just as fond of me?"

"I don't know, but I should," said Ronald. "Besides, it is absurd, for I shall never love any one else."

"We shall see; but of course if you never do, we shall always be just the same as we are now."

"Well, that would not be so bad, you know," said Ronald with a certain air of resignation.

After this conversation Ronald became recon-

ciled to the situation. Joe's remark, that he would be able to love some one else very much, without being any the less fond of herself made him reflect, and he came to the conclusion that the case was conceivable after all. He therefore agreed within himself that he would think no more about the matter for the present, but would take what came in his way and trust that Joe would ultimately change her mind. But he went to Mrs. Wyndham's that evening with a firm determination to dislike John Harrington to the best of his ability.

A middle-aged man with red hair! Five-and-thirty was undoubtedly middle-age. Short, too. But Joe had blushed, and there was no doubt about it; this was the man who had won her affections. Ronald would hate him cordially.

But John refused to be hated. His manner was easy and courteous, but not gentle. He was evidently no lady's man. He talked to the men more than to the women, and he was utterly without affectation. Indeed, he was not in the least like what Ronald had expected.

Moreover, Ronald was seated next to Sybil Brandon at dinner, and drove every one away

who tried to disturb the *tête-à-tête* he succeeded in procuring with her afterwards. He was surprised at his own conduct, but he somehow connected it in his mind with his desire to hate Harrington. It was not very clear to himself, and it certainly would have been incomprehensible to any one else, but the presence of Harrington stimulated him in his efforts to amuse Miss Brandon.

Sybil, too, in her quiet way, was very willing to be amused, and she found in Ronald Surbiton an absolute freshness of ideas that gave her a new sense of pleasure. Her affair with Vancouver had made a deep impression on her mind, and her mother's death soon afterwards had had the effect of withdrawing her entirely from the world. It was no wonder therefore that she liked this young Englishman, so different from most of the men she knew best. It was natural, too, that he should want to talk to her, for she was the only young girl present. At last, as Ronald began to feel that intimacy which sometimes grows out of a simple conversation between two sympathetic people, he turned to the subject he had most in mind, if not most in his heart.

"You and my cousin are very intimate, Miss Brandon, I believe?" he said.

"Yes—I have grown very fond of her in a few weeks." Sybil wondered whether Ronald was going to make confidences. It seemed to her rather early in the acquaintance.

"Yes, she told me," said Ronald. "She is very fond of you, too; I went to see her this morning."

"I suppose you go every day," said Sybil, smiling.

"No—not every day," answered Ronald. "But this morning I was asking her about some of the people here. She seems to know every one."

"Yes indeed, she is immensely popular. Whom did she tell you about?"

"Oh—Mrs. Wyndham, and Mr. Wyndham, and Mr. Vancouver, and Mr. Harrington. He is immensely clever, she says," added Ronald, with a touch of irony in his voice. "What do you think about him, Miss Brandon?"

"I cannot judge very well," said Sybil. "He is a great friend of mine, and I do not care in the least whether my friends are clever or not."

"Joe does," said Ronald. "She hates stupid

people. She is very clever too, you know, and so I suppose she is right about Harrington."

"Oh yes—I was only speaking of myself," answered Sybil. "He is probably the strongest man in this part of the world."

"He looks strong," said Ronald, who was a judge of athletes.

"I mean in the way of brains," said Sybil. "But he is more than that, for he is so splendidly honest."

"But lots of people are honest," said Ronald, who did not want to concede too much to the man he meant to dislike.

"Perhaps, but not so much as he is. I do not believe John Harrington ever in his life said anything that could possibly convey a false impression, or ever betrayed a confidence." Sybil looked calmly across the room at John, who was talking earnestly to Sam Wyndham.

"But has he no defects at all? What a model of faultlessness!" exclaimed Ronald.

"People say he is self-centred, whatever that may mean. He is certainly a very ambitious man, but his ambitions are large, and he makes no secret of them. He will make a great stir in the world some day."

Ronald would have liked to ask about Vancouver also, but he fortunately remembered what Joe had told him that morning, and did not ask his questions of Sybil. But he went home that night wondering what manner of man this Harrington might be, concerning whom such great things were said. He was conscious also that he had not been very wise in what he had asked of Sybil, and he was dissatisfied at not having heard anything about the friendship that existed between Harrington and Joe. But on the whole he had enjoyed the evening very much—almost too much, when he remembered the things Joe had said to him in the morning. It ought not to be possible, he thought, for a jilted lover to look so pleasantly on life.

“Well,” said Sam Wyndham to his wife when everybody was gone, and he had lit a big cigar; “well, it was a pleasant kind of an evening, was not it?”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Sam, sitting down in a low easy-chair for a chat with her husband. “What a nice boy that young Englishman is!”

“I was just going to say so,” said Sam. “He made himself pretty comfortable with



Sybil, did he not? I could not help thinking they looked a very pretty pair as they sat in that corner. What is he?"

"He is Miss Thorn's cousin. Sam, you really must not drop your ashes on the carpet. There are no end of saucers and things about."

"Oh, bother the carpet, my dear," said Sam good-naturedly; "tell me about that young fellow—what is his name?—Surbiton, is not it?"

"Yes—well, there is not very much to tell. He is here travelling for amusement, just like any other young Englishman. For my part I expected he had come here to marry his cousin, because Englishmen always marry their cousins. But Sybil says it is not true."

"How does she come to know?" inquired Sam, rolling his cigar in his mouth and looking at the ceiling.

"I suppose Miss Thorn told her. She ought to know, any way."

"Well, one would think so. By the way, this election is going to turn out a queer sort of a business, I expect. John says the only thing that is doubtful is that fellow Patrick Ballymolloy and his men. Now is not that just about the queerest thing you ever heard of? A set of

Irishmen in the Legislature who are not sure they can manage to vote for a Democratic senator ? ”

“ Yes, that is something altogether new,” said Mrs. Wyndham. “ But it seems so funny that John should come telling you all about his election, when you are such a Republican, and would go straight against him if you had anything to say about it.”

“ Oh, he knows I don't vote or anything,” said Sam.

“ Of course you don't vote, because you are not in the Legislature. But if you did, you would go against him, would not you ? ”

“ Well, I am not sure,” answered Sam in a drawl of uncertainty. “ I tell you what it is, my dear, John Harrington is not such a bad Republican after all, though he is a Democrat. And it is my belief he could call himself a Republican, and could profess to believe just the same things as he does now, if he only took a little care.”

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